



Open Awareness

Handbook

seeing with new eyes

Second Edition

2019

By Jevon Dängeli

Open Awareness Handbook

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I would also like to express my gratitude to all the open awareness facilitators, professional coaches and postgraduate students who have contributed articles to this edition.

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The skills and processes introduced in this handbook are among those that are taught at the live [Open Awareness weekend events](#) and in the [online Open Awareness training](#).

Foreword

By Dr Hennie Geldenhuys

I began my journey in Open Awareness (OA) back in 2014. Or rather, the journey had begun many years before that, but started to manifest when I met Jevon for the first time and was introduced to the fascinating world of transpersonal coaching. Like many of us, I had dabbled in and experimented, in one way or another, with various contemplative traditions and concepts. I had been practicing, albeit intermittently and somewhat blindly, meditation, mindfulness, and other forms of reflective practices. I needed some direction.

I was searching, and still am, for ways to engage with the mystery of our being, for ways to be a more complete and effective person, to be more productive, more creative, cope better with stress and anxiety, be a better father, colleague, friend, and have more compassion.

I was on a journey of exploration into the mystical nature of being in the outer physical world, with a job and a family, and a life, with things to do; as well as in my own inner world with thoughts, images, dreams, triggers and reflexes, many of them non-conscious. And then there was also my spiritual essence, surely I was more than just me, surely I was part of something bigger and if so, what tools could I learn to discover all these profound meanings?

And that's where Open Awareness comes in. What is OA? OA is not the answer, it's not a magic bullet, it's not the latest self-help fad. What it is, is a philosophy and a methodology that provides us with a set of tools with which to explore stuff for ourselves. Technically, OA is a state of awareness, a certain way of being aware. This way of being aware has certain characteristics that makes it very useful for many of the things I have been searching for, and I'm sure you too.

I would urge you to experiment, and question, as you engage with this manual and the experiences and practices that it represents. OA is open ended, there is no right or wrong way, and it has no sacred cows.

You will find, in this manual, many ways of practising OA, and some profound thinking from some brilliant and wise people. As a way of life it is meant to be experienced, but also examined, and questioned, and improved on all the time. As a field of study it is growing all the time, and each of us, no matter who we are, our backgrounds or our experience, are by nature experts in our own OA journey. We all have plenty to contribute through engaging with the magic of OA.

I do need to make special mention of one of those brilliant and wise people. It has been an honour for me to learn from Jevon. He has been the creator, inspiration and the driving force behind OA. Together with his lovely wife Jana, he has spent endless hours putting his deep insights into a form that the rest of us can apply and practise. Thank you, Jevon.

I'm still on my journey of discovery. Each of us is. You will find in this edition of the OA manual, practices that are both pragmatic and profound, secular and spiritual, theoretical and experiential. May OA be for you on your journey, just what you need, at just the right time, in just the right way. You'll know what I mean by that.

Hennie Geldenhuys, MD

August 2019

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Introduction to the Open Awareness Handbook (Second edition)

This second edition of the OA Handbook was launched in Paris on 27 September 2019 during Jevon Dangeli's presentation on Open Awareness at the European Transpersonal Association (EUROTAS) Conference.

A lot has changed since the first edition in 2017. The methods to establish and embody OA, as well as the ways in which OA can be applied in coaching, therapy and life, have evolved significantly over the past 2 years. These updates, as far as they can be put in writing, have been integrated into this edition, which includes more than twice the volume of content than the first edition.

New content in this edition:

- A new layout consisting of 5 chapters and other content sections (see Table of Contents)
- New OA information and skills, including "jumi (judo mind)" for embodying OA
- Articles from OA facilitators and students who have explored the value of OA
- A list of free OA resources, including links to training videos
- Updates to some of the previous edition's content

Introduction to Open Awareness

Open Awareness (OA) can be described as the flow of pure experience interconnected with the rest of reality.

More specifically:

OA is a mindful mode of perception accompanied by a calm and receptive state.

OA cultivates *metacognitive introspective awareness* – in which the mind can observe its own state and activities – an awareness of the mind itself.

OA enhances *extrospective awareness* – sensory perceptions and bodily sensations.

OA reframes one's current experience of self, placing phenomena within one's awareness, as opposed to these being experienced separate from oneself. This calms the mind, relaxes the body and promotes a sense of interconnection with the rest of life.

OA can be visually represented through the image of a *zen circle* (Ensō), depicting the connection between inner and outer through the open space in the circle - which is itself representative of both cyclical movement and infinity.



DISCLAIMER

OA is not intended to diagnose, treat or cure any mental health or medical conditions. OA is not a replacement for psychotherapy or psychological counselling.



Open Awareness

Seeing with New Eyes

Chapter 1

Open Awareness Theory and Methodology

This chapter includes articles that introduce what OA is and how it works, including how the practice of OA can be beneficial in a variety of contexts, especially for stress reduction, burnout prevention, healing and performance enhancement.

Also included in this chapter is how applying OA may help to counteract the negative consequences of excessive screen-time, e.g. smartphones, thereby providing hope for the *digital zombie* generation.

The Value of Open Awareness in the Digital Age

(Hope for Digital Zombies)

We cannot solve our problems with the same thinking we used when we created them.

– Albert Einstein –

A majority of my clients (in [coaching](#) and [therapy](#)) have suffered from the symptoms of stress, anxiety and burnout. In listening to how these clients have described their personal issues I consistently detected a particular pattern that was almost always present. After a careful and long-term assessment, investigating cases since 2004, I established that this pattern played a crucial role in how these individuals were being negatively affected. The discovery was that the onset of this pattern, its very trigger, involved a particular mode of perception in which these individuals had become completely focused with their attention on something unpleasant in the situation or on a predominant symptom. This focus was always narrowly fixated, thus these individuals were usually unaware of what else was possible or achievable in those situations. Even if they were aware of other possibilities, their locked-in ways of approaching the situation prevented them from establishing more resourceful perceptions and responses. In one sense, their problems arose because of tunnel awareness and remained problems largely because of this limited frame of reference.



Through learning how to open the aperture of their awareness and to integrate this broader perspective, these individuals have (to varying degrees) been able to shift their perception of themselves in relation to the challenging situation or symptom. This was brought about through the establishment of a more expanded sense of self from where the issue could be seen and approached from a more

holistic perspective. The experimental process that I used in these sessions (which has become the open awareness technique) included guiding the client to embody their broader perspective, and from that expanded as well as interconnected sense of self, address the situation or symptom more mindfully and resourcefully. At the very least, these individuals have experienced a positive and sustainable change. Healing and transformation have been frequent outcomes.

Over the past several years, [open awareness \(OA\) facilitators](#) and their clients have reported that OA not only enables them to deal with stressful situations more resourcefully, but they are able to establish a calm and mindful state with relative ease, as well as sleep better, concentrate for longer, overcome mental blocks and improve performance. Additionally, through becoming less identified with a limiting self-concept, they are less controlled by negative thoughts and reactions. Those who have integrated open awareness through practising it regularly have told me that they feel a deep sense of connection with other individuals. Some speak of an enhanced connection with nature and the spiritual realm, while others refer more to a sense of oneness in which there is no real separation between self and other (or between subject and object). With this comes inner peace and meaning in life.

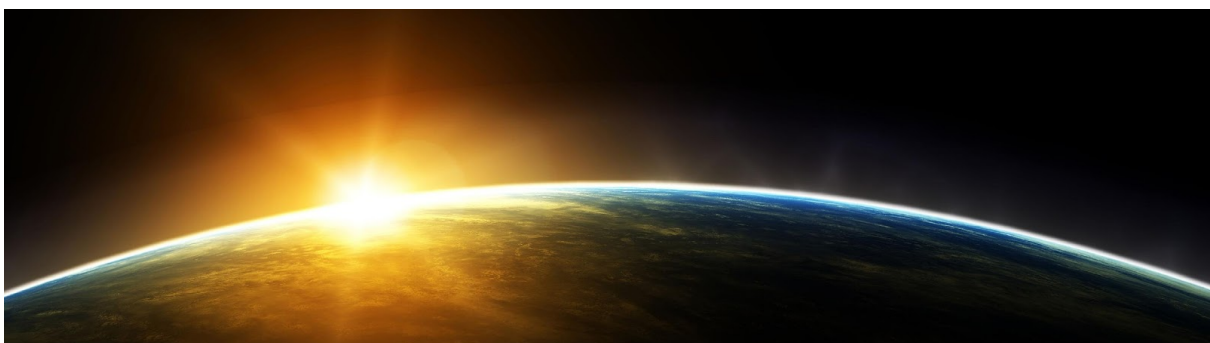
The history of Open Awareness

Open awareness is a particular mode of perception in which individuals are attentive to both their own thoughts and feelings as well as those of others, including the context that connects them. It is a type of attention that is close to being simultaneously inward and outward focused, thereby making one more conscious of the interrelatedness of phenomena. The earliest tracings of open awareness appear to stem from Buddhist origins (Gunaratana, 1996) and it was possibly first introduced in the West through the teachings of George Ivanovich Gurdjieff in the early 1900s (Ouspensky, 1971). These days, aspects of open awareness have been integrated into some of the techniques of [Neuro Linguistic Programming](#) (NLP) (Bandler & Grinder, 1976; Overdurf, 2013) and other psychological

interventions, although it has received only nominal attention from the scientific community (E.G., Farb, et al. 2007, Hanson, 2011).

Opening the aperture of awareness

Open awareness (OA) involves the intentional observation of one's thoughts, feelings, and sensory perceptions in the present through opening the aperture of one's awareness. This type of opening is facilitated by means of expanding one's mode of perception to include the aspects of each unfolding experience that usually occur in or beyond the outskirts of conscious awareness and which are therefore usually unconscious or disregarded. In addition to identifying the subtleties of one's internal experience, open awareness includes becoming receptive to the energetic and relational links between oneself and others and the environment. Depending on the individual and their reason for practising open awareness, the experience of self fluctuates and is therefore not an ultimate state, but rather one in which the individual experiences a felt sense of expansiveness and interconnection resulting from dis-identification from their limited self-concept. Open awareness is more than a technique, it is a natural mode of being, one that we, as humans, find ourselves in when we are completely free of burdens on every level—physical, mental, emotional and spiritual (Finlay 2013).



Escaping the trap of tunnel awareness

Research done by Olpin and Hesson (2015) suggests that stress is proliferating, with more people being negatively affected by it today than ever before. Indeed, in an attempt to deal with the new or intensified types of challenges that the predominantly high-tech and fast-paced lifestyles of today demand, we are, to a certain degree, being forced into a chronic tunnel awareness in our attempts to fulfil many of our functions in both the workforce and in our social life. The cost is high!

Tunnel awareness has been associated with:

- Scattered thoughts and brain fog (Yates, 2015)
- Poor concentration (Spitzer, 2016)
- Short attention span (Spitzer, 2016)
- Learning disabilities (Spitzer, 2016)
- Long-term memory problems (Spitzer, 2016)
- Prolonged fight-or-flight response (Hanson, 2011)
- Tunnel awareness tells your brain to be on the lookout (Spitzer, 2016 and Twenge, 2017), thus problems with sleep. Even counting sheep is tunnel awareness!



With our attention locked in by the gadgets (predominantly smartphones) that we have become accustomed to use in order to operate in this world, we may find ourselves unable or less able to release our attention, when appropriate, in order to interact with each other

and our environment in an ethical and effective manner. The result on individuals may be a rise in specific social and relational problems, as well as elevated stress levels, which, if unresolved can lead to burnout (Brühlmann, 2011; Cartwright & Cooper, 1996). This phenomenon may in turn further convince one to retreat into a virtual world and to favour interacting with virtual “friends” for the sake of convenience, quick fixes, and immediate gratification (Twenge, 2017). This hypothesis suggests that as an increasing amount of the world’s human population becomes more tuned into a virtual reality, our ability to tune back out into the rest of reality may become jeopardised. In a mode of tunnel awareness, one may be less able to think creatively and deal with life’s stressors resourcefully (Farb, et al. 2007; Finlay 2013; Hanson, 2011; Overdurf, 2013; Rossi, 1993; Ouspensky, 1971). On the other hand, if one is able to counteract such a narrowing of awareness, through applying a means to reopen one’s mode of perception, then the person may find that he or she is better equipped to navigate the multi-dimensional challenges of life beyond the flat screens of our electronic devices.

A potential resulting effect on us as a collective may be that we have become tuned out of what was, in past times, a more common state for us, in exchange for being tuned in to the devices that many believe make life convenient in this era. Society has never before had the technological means to capture and narrow our attention as it does today. With our online digital devices readily on hand, the media and the medium have merged, and the result is, to some extent, that we have become the victims of attention slavery, giving rise to a generation of *digital zombies* (Spitzer, 2016).

Hope for Digital Zombies

A digital zombie can be described as a person using digital technology to a point that they become fixated in an artificial reality.

Psychiatrist and neuroscientist Manfred Spitzer (2016) argues



that digital zombies have difficulty looking people in the eye or carrying on healthy conversations. They are less aware of life happening around them (classic tunnel awareness), and they have limited social skills in the real world. Furthermore, they are prone to an early onset dementia, known as digital dementia (Spitzer, 2016). Generational research has shown that the more time we spend looking at screens, the more likely we are to experience psychological distress and depression (Twenge, 2017). Excessive use of smartphones can potentially hard-wire tunnel awareness in children and adults, with detrimental consequences regarding health, learning and attention disorders, performance issues, relationship conflicts and social problems (Spitzer, 2016, Twenge, 2017). Tunnel awareness may be an underlying cause of the sense of separateness between individuals, religions, ethnic groups, etc. It narrows our perceptions and capacity to think, feel and behave holistically.

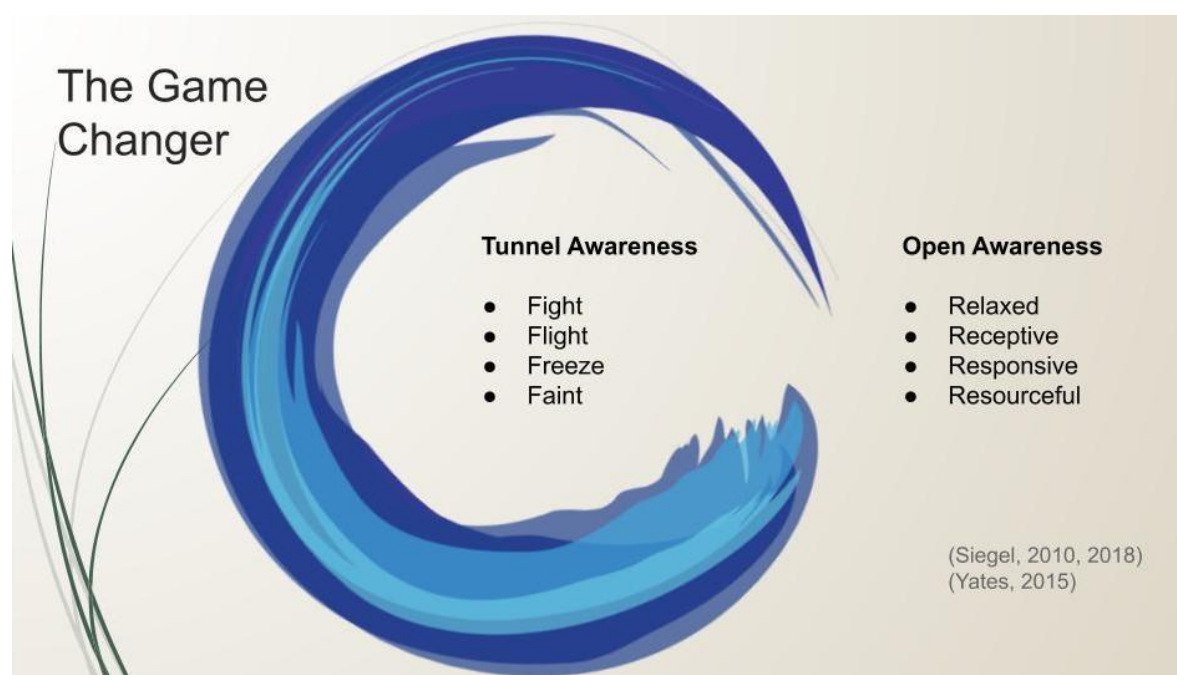
Spitzer (2016) warns:

- Digital technology lowers the grades of school children most who already struggle academically.
- More screen time means more psychological distress and depression.
- Depressed people are more depressed after using social media.

- Quitting social media for a week improves social life satisfaction.
- Excessive screen use deteriorates one's ability to empathise.
- Smartphones present serious risks and side effects in terms of health, education and social life.

Open Awareness to the Rescue

Open awareness has been found to counteract stress, anxiety, and a sense of separateness by activating a calm and resourceful state that is accompanied by a sense of interconnectedness (Yates, 2015, Dangelis, 2015, Hanson, 2011). Through using and teaching open awareness techniques since 2004, as well as studying the phenomenology of open awareness in my 2015 MSc research, I have found that shifting out of tunnel awareness into open awareness can be achieved with relative ease by children and adults of at least moderate physical and psychological health. By introducing open awareness skills in learning environments and in the workplace, the harmful effects of tunnel awareness can be prevented, and mindful resourcefulness can be promoted.



Embodying Open Awareness

In order for open awareness to be reliably available and effective in stressful situations, it needs to become embodied through regular practice. There are a variety of practices available today, many of which can be learned in a short amount of time. I've been practising judo since the age of five. During the 1990s, I began combining basic judo movements with yoga and qigong. Eventually a distinct practice that I refer to as jumi (judo mind) was established. The core objective of jumi is to develop and embody open awareness. While jumi serves as a mind-body practice by itself, it can also be used to compliment other integral practices. There are jumi sequences suitable from young to old, at any level of fitness and psycho-spiritual development. These days I readily recommend jumi practice to my clients, and they consistently report positive results. Examples of Jumi practices are shared in the next section of this book.

Conclusion

Open awareness (OA) is a mindful mode of perception accompanied by a calm, receptive, and resourceful state. OA cultivates metacognitive introspective awareness—in which the mind can observe its own state and activities—an awareness of the mind itself. OA enhances extrospective awareness—sensory perceptions and somatic experience. OA reframes one's current experience of self, placing phenomena within one's awareness as opposed to these being experienced separate from oneself. This reduces distress, enhances intuition, and promotes a sense of interconnection. OA can be easily learned and applied in all contexts. Jumi practice is recommend for embodying OA.

Visit the Open Awareness Website: <http://authentic-self-empowerment.com/oa/>

Visit the Jumi website: <http://jumi.live>

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Mindfulness, Bodyfulness and Open Awareness

Mindfulness, Bodyfulness and Open Awareness are 3 sides of the same coin. This article describes their commonalities and differences, as well as their applications in terms of personal growth and transpersonal development.

As new illnesses arise and the world's problems proliferate, it's clear that new solutions are needed. Many of the significant problems the world faces today, whether personally,- environmentally,- socially,- economically,- and others are issues that stem (at least in part) from a lack of awareness of our multidimensional interrelatedness in the vast web of life. According to Albert Einstein, seeing ourselves as individual disconnected entities in the universe is an *optical delusion of consciousness* (Einstein, 1977). He recognised that in order to solve the problems that we experience on one level, we require expanded levels of perception. Tunnel awareness (a limited perception of oneself in relation to one's surroundings) is a contributory cause of why we experience ourselves as separate from everyone and everything else in life, which in turn leads us to behave destructively toward ourselves, others and our environment. In this article I will point out how Open Awareness can broaden one's level of perception, leading from self-concept to Self-realisation, and thus be of healing and transformative value to humans and our world.

Tunnel awareness can be understood as a narrowed focus of attention that deletes everything in the periphery of one's field of awareness from one's personal consciousness. The fight and flight response is associated with being in tunnel awareness, as in this state one usually identifies only the perceived danger while deleting whatever else is not necessary in our field of awareness in order to survive a life threatening situation. One may behave similarly in situations that are not threatening to one's life, but considered by the individual to be unpleasant or disturbing, where one remains fixated on the object of negative reference while all other points of reference, including the quality of one's own thoughts and feelings are negated (Drummond, D. n.d). Those who experience overwhelming stress or the burnout syndrome are usually stuck in a form of tunnel

awareness, whereby that which perpetuates the problem is what one's attention remains focussed on, thus the problem remains a problem. Satisfying solutions might only be discovered when the individual succeeds in shifting their state of consciousness in a way that enables them to dis-identify from their limited self-concept. This could be facilitated through expanding the sense of self and establishing a broader perspective, which in turn may increase one's awareness of choices beyond those that are determined through identification with the limited self-concept.

Each state of consciousness offers a different view of reality, thus one's perception of reality is only partially true, therefore one's state of consciousness determines one's current model of the world (Walsh & Vaughn, 1980). On this basis, expanding one's experience of self in a manner that includes shifting one's state of consciousness into a calm and receptive mode – not only enables one to see the bigger picture, but also experience oneself differently in relation to one's environment and the circumstances that are associated with it. Hunt (2007) considers transformation to be possible through a more complete letting go of the ordinary boundaries of self in order to reveal the more subtle levels of the Unconscious. Open awareness enables one to release identification with the self-concept and become aware of the more subtle levels of consciousness that are normally beyond our level of perception. In discussing his own model of self-expansiveness, Harris Friedman (2013) explains:

Self-expansiveness rests on the view that the self-concept can be relatively narrowly construed, limited to the isolated individual bound in the here-and-now of the present, or can expand to include others, nature, and even a transpersonally constituted identity where the sense of self can extend to allow for boundless identity with all of nature (p. 204).

Friedman suggests that transpersonal self-expansiveness and its cartography unifies all perspectives of the self-concept within a single holistic framework (Ibid p. 207). In terms of transpersonal healing and growth Friedman points out that beyond the framework of his construct, another self expanding strategy might be “dis-identification”, provided it is not

taken to extremes (Ibid p.213). The process of open awareness focuses primarily on enabling individuals to dis-identify from their self-concept through facilitating an expanded sense of self that transcends one's direct experience of space. More specifically, open awareness assists one to identify all sensory experiences within one's field of awareness, as opposed to these being experienced outside or separate from them.

Those whom I have guided to experience the expanded state induced through the practice of open awareness often report that the boundaries between self and not self seem to dissolve, bringing about a sense that all experiences unfold within the Self (a felt sense of oneness with everything in awareness). Feelings of being interconnected with all things are common when practising peripheral awareness in the same way consciousness researchers have described the effects of other transpersonal practices (e.g. Fadiman, Grob, Griffiths, Nichols, C., Nichols, D., et al., 2009) and thus identification with the self-concept is replaced (although sometimes only temporarily) with a more encompassing and seemingly infinite experience of Self. The process ends by embodying the expanded state (feeling it in the physical form) and then choosing how to approach challenging situations from the point of view of the Self (or while the individual is experiencing a holotropic state of consciousness (Stanislav Grof's term for "moving toward wholeness" (2000)). Depending on the individual and their reason for practising open awareness, the experience of Self fluctuates and is therefore not an ultimate state, but rather one in which the individual experiences a felt sense of expansiveness and interconnection resulting from dis-identification from a limiting self-concept.

Open awareness in relation to mindfulness and bodyfulness

While until now empirical evidence for the value of open awareness remains mostly reserved for those who undertake the practice, scientific data does at least validate the calm and relaxed state of well-being due to parasympathetic nervous system activation that the skill stimulates (e.g. Hanson, 2011 and Farb, et al. 2007). Both open awareness and mindfulness (the way in which it is most commonly known in the West) involve establishing

present moment awareness and being non-judgemental. There is however one fundamental difference in the two practices that I will outline here.

Some *Westernised* mindfulness practices deliberately bring intentionality to the present moment, for example: watching thoughts, abstaining from judgments, accepting feelings, etc. With open awareness, the only intention is to open the aperture of one's awareness. This kind of opening of one's field of awareness naturally in and of itself calms the mind, enhances one's sensory acuity and cultivates a sense that all things (in one's present experience) are constantly unfolding and interlinked processes within one's awareness, where the boundaries between subject and object seem to dissolve. This leads to a sense of interconnection with others (which results in compassion) and the world 'around' us (which seems more within us at this stage). One feels expanded, peaceful and there is little self-talk or none at all. Any self-talk that may be judgemental can be quite easily heard as the voice of one's self-concept (or ego) from which one has dis-identified, thus it has no significant influence.

Many practitioners would likely agree that the objective of performance enhancing skills, as well as many types of meditation and spiritual practices is to embody them, so that they become one's automatic response in the relevant contexts of life. Bodyfulness (Ferrer, 2008) is when no trace of conscious intention is present, yet the individual reflexively responds to experiences in a mindful, compassionate and wise manner. Practitioners of open awareness have found that it has more of a 'being nature' to it with little intentionality, while mindfulness practice (in the common Western approach) has a slightly more 'doing nature' to it, with more intentionality. On this basis open awareness leads to bodyfulness with relative ease through practice and sooner or later (depending on the individual) almost no intention is required in order for open awareness to become embodied and therefore an enduring state. Open awareness is not being advocated as superior to mindfulness, but rather as a helpful approach to achieve mindfulness and to more easily embody a mindful approach to life in general.

The experience of activating transpersonal states and perspectives such as open awareness, as outlined above, suggests that one's sense of self (self-concept) can become expanded to be more inclusive of phenomena that might ordinarily be unconscious or experienced as separate from oneself. Additionally, a mindful orientation is also being associated with open awareness, and as such, applications of this approach can be useful in the context of [transpersonal coaching](#).

References at end of book

The Open Awareness Remedy for Stress and Burnout

In this article I will comment on studies that indicate how mindfulness and meditation are related to resilience, self-regulation and purpose. Drawing on research as well as direct personal experience, I will suggest that mindfulness and meditation are valuable to programmes that aim to prevent as well as heal the effects of overwhelming stress and burnout.



Burnout is believed to result from unwavering and persistent stress (Cartwright & Cooper, 1996; Selye, 1950), therefore, since it is known to reduce stress, mindfulness is most likely helpful to alleviate burnout too and might even serve as a preventative measure. Burnout has been referred to as a 'soul sickness' (Wright, 2010, p 8.), where one reaches a point of being sick and tired of being sick and tired, but oblivious of any solution. A common aspect of burnout are dysfunctional attitudes and behaviours that are disengaged from the present moment (cited in Dierendonck, Garssen & Visser, 2005). This is similar to what (Brown & Ryan, 2003) describe as "mindlessness", being the opposite of mindfulness, which they consider to be an open and active mental state that is engaged with experiences as they unfold in the moment.

Physician burnout specialist Doctor Dike Drummond (2012) refers to Burnout as a calling, calling for a change. The problem is that those headed for burnout and those already affected by it don't hear that call because of their lack of mindfulness (present moment awareness). One reason for not paying attention to themselves is because soon to be or already burnt out people are usually pursuing external goals (often unsuccessfully) and are generally less concerned with their own internal needs, hence they become drained of

energy and burn out. Unless helped, those with burnout will most likely continue to not hear the call and this can result in a downward spiralling of the burnout syndrome, making matters even worse.

Recent research (cited in Gonza'lez-Morales, G., et al. 2012) has demonstrated that the experience of burnout in organisations is contagious and it can be transferred from one employee to another. Katz et al. (2005) have found that mindfulness based stress reduction (MBSR) techniques have the potential to transform, not only individual relationships, but also the overall work environment, thus preventing burnout from spreading. Their data affirmed that MBSR is a useful intervention for helping to resolve old wounds and unresolved issues. This is an example of how mindfulness can address the cause of stress and burnout.

Mindfulness in relation to resilience

What is missing for many sufferers of stress and burnout is resilience – the ability to maintain “elasticity” and “buoyancy” (dictionary.com) in the face of adversity. In Jacobs, T. L., et al. (2011) resilience is referred to as a family of connected phenomena that enable one to adapt adequately in challenging situations.



Siegel (2007) claims that mindfulness practice is scientifically proven to develop a long-term state of resilience by enhancing physical, mental, and social wellbeing. The integration of mindfulness practices is suggested by Meiklejohn et al. (2012) to enhance self-regulation of one's emotions and focus of attention, whilst cultivating mental flexibility, which in turn promotes resilience. This is further confirmed by studies, which have shown that mindfulness is associated with resilience toward stress and burnout (Bonanno, 2004; Kelley, 2005; Meiklejohn et al., 2012; Irving, J. A., Dobkin, P. L., & Park, J., 2009; Cohen-Katz, Wiley, Capuano, Baker, & Shapiro, 2005; Mackenzie, Poulin, & Seidman-Carlson, 2006).

Mindfulness has also been associated with the enhancement of well-being, since it is known to enable people to disengage from unhealthy, automatic behavioural patterns (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Their view is supported by Brown & Ryan's (2003) research which indicates that higher levels of mindfulness are correlated with the lower level of stress and mood disturbance, and will therefore contribute to improving resilience.

Mindfulness in relation to self-regulation

Bonanno's (2004) research suggests that all human beings with unhampered mental health have an innate capacity for resilience and well-being even while facing adversity (cited Kelley, T, 2005, p. 265). According to Ciarrochi, Chan, Caputi, and Roberts (2001), difficulty identifying feelings is likely to predispose an individual to poorer mental health. Various studies support the idea that an individual with a greater ability to identify their emotions will be able to regulate those emotions better (cited in Barrett, L. F., Gross, J., Christensen, T. C., & Benvenuto, M., 2001, p. 721). Inherent in mindfulness approaches is the ability to adapt and regulate one's thoughts, feelings and actions according to the situation (Baliki, Ceha, Apkarian, & Chialvo, 2008; cited in Niemiec, Rashid, Spinella, 2012). Rather than perceiving mental and emotional states as fixed, the mindful approach identifies their impermanent nature and treats them as transitory phenomena (Kabat-Zinn, 1990; Segal, Williams & Teasdale, 2002). The mindful disposition does nonetheless require an ongoing initiative for which regular self-regulation practice in the form of meditation is recommended (Kabat-Zinn, 1990).

Mindfulness in relation to purpose

While meditation cultivates mindfulness (Kabat-Zinn, 2003; Jacobs, T. L., et al. (2011), research done by Jacobs, T. L., et al. also indicates that meditation is known to promote a sense of meaning and purpose in life (2011). Their study suggests that meditation may facilitate an expanded assessment of one's life as meaningful, which in turn may influence one's assessment of challenging situations, resulting in improved self regulation and enhanced resilience to stress. This idea is in alignment with former research verifying that the perception of meaning is associated with better stress management (e.g., Okamoto et al., 2007). Additional evidence shows that when stressful situations are infused with a purposeful meaning, the result is more adaptive stress responses and better psychological coping (e.g., Bower et al., 2008).

The link between mindfulness and purpose may offer particular value to burnout treatment programmes, since burnout is associated with a deficit in existential meaning and purpose (Frankl, 1963; Längle, 1994). A central purpose in a person's life is suggested to influence the thoughts, emotions, and actions of that person, as well as enhance that person's resiliency in stressful situations (cited in McKnight & Kashdan, 2009). There are apparently similar outcomes when comparing approaches that are motivated by a strong sense of purpose and those of mindfulness in contrast to no sense of purpose or mindlessness. Comparing the research cited in McKnight & Kashdan (2009) on purpose with that cited in Malinowski (2008) on mindfulness; common outcomes appear to be: an improved ability to understand and cope with stress, enhanced resilience, more adaptable self regulation, as well as a generally elevated psychological, physical, and social well-being.

In addition to considering the complementary factors that are associated with both purpose and mindfulness, there are attributes of both that are not shared, for example: inherent in purpose is a broader motivational component driving the achievement of goals which support that purpose (McKnight & Kashdan, 2009); while inherent in mindfulness is nonjudgmental awareness of experiences in the present moment (Kabat-Zinn, 1990), as well as the possibility of insight into the true nature of existence (Olendzki, 2010). These

characteristic differences between purpose and mindfulness can also be viewed as complementary resources that may be supportive in the pursuit of dealing holistically with stress issues and burnout.

In their discussion on the attributes of purpose, McKnight & Kashdan suggest that people with access to a large set of self-regulatory tools (like MBSR techniques, for example), with an ability to flexibly apply them, are in an optimal position to navigate the challenges of life and sustain high levels of healthy functioning (2009).

Mindfulness in relation to meditation

Mindfulness meditation does not aim to change us in any way, but rather helps us to be more unconditionally present with our current experience in the moment. This form of meditation is normally practised seated, although mindful awareness is not only reserved for sitting



meditations, but also intended to be brought to all tasks and interactions throughout each day in order to integrate mindfulness into one's life. Historically, mindfulness is a concept stemming from ancient Buddhist philosophy (Bhikkhu, 2010). Today, mindfulness meditation is commonly applied for stress reduction and personal development in various contexts and cultures.

Since both resilience and self-regulation have been shown in this article to be promoted by purpose and mindfulness, which in turn arises from meditation, it appears as if meditation should be central in approaches to treating stress and burnout. It may be argued that mindfulness does not depend on meditation. Mindfulness can also arise from consciously selected perspectives that enable one to evaluate one's identity with thoughts, emotions and sensations, and to experience them simply as cognitive events, however this approach requires self-knowledge, realizing larger patterns of meaning, and taking a wider view (Niemic, Rashid, Spinella, 2012). Such a *metacognitive perspective* (Teasdale, 1999) makes it possible to see the aspects of any experience as temporary phenomena rather than creating an identity from them, but such an aptitude might be more difficult to achieve in challenging situations without it being embodied via regular meditation practice. Meditation helps to embody mindful awareness so that it becomes an enduring state. The stress reducing benefits of meditation coupled with establishing purpose in life suggests that the meditation approach to attaining mindfulness is especially well suited to stress and burnout treatment programmes.

The problem is that many people who could benefit from mindfulness meditation are missing out for a variety of reasons that might include misunderstanding, or failure to recognise the benefits, or simply not enough time or discipline to learn and practice meditation regularly. For such people the demystification of meditation and practical advantages of simple meditation skills, once brought to their attention, might be seen as a solution to help them deal more effectively with daily challenges.

Whilst it is not the goal of meditation to fix problems, bringing awareness of meditation's stress reducing and improved coping benefits (Katz et al. 2005) to those who face stress and burnout might encourage such people to consider meditation as a worthwhile approach. What might further assist people to choose meditation could be awareness of effective meditation methods that are easy and practical to apply in the different contexts of life. An example of such an approach is the technique to bring about [open awareness](#) (OA), which activates the body's natural state of relaxation, while sharpening one's sensory acuity, reducing self-talk, as well as depotentiating fear and stress reactions (Hanson, 2011; Overdurf, 2013).

The basic OA technique takes only a few minutes to learn (see examples in the next chapter), it can be applied in any place at any time of day, and the benefits of using it begin to take effect within a few seconds. On this basis, it is suggested that open awareness may be of particular use to busy people who don't have time to formally meditate, or those who are sceptical of Eastern practices, including those who might be at risk of being affected by stress or burnout. Furthermore, I have personally found that the establishment of OA serves as a useful expediency to access deeper levels of meditation, and when brought to one's tasks and interactions, it facilitates a mindful orientation.

In conclusion, mindfulness, especially when integrated through forms of meditation appears to be a valuable aspect of programmes that intend to promote well-being. Evidence suggests that meditation promotes a sense of purpose, the ability to self-regulate and the enhancement of resilience — three interrelated aspects that have been shown to be

constructive in the treatment of overwhelming stress and burnout. Niemiec, Rashid & Spinella, (2012) point out that the integration of mindfulness may well be a formula to cultivate productive engagement in work, an expanded sense of meaning and purpose, enhanced physical and psychological well-being, and improved relationships. The achievement of mindfulness can counteract the effect of stressors that can lead to burnout, thus mindfulness practices such as the open awareness technique may contribute to the alleviation of burnout symptoms and possibly even play a significant role in burnout prevention.

My [2015 MSc research](#) results suggest that OA:

- Increases mindful resilience to stress and burnout.
- Enhances performance (mental and physical) and promote flow.
- Cultivates a sense of interconnection, as well as:



References at end of book

Open Awareness for Preventing and Recovering from Burnout

Burnout (mental, emotional, physical and spiritual fatigue) is generally considered to be caused by too much stress over an extended period where one loses hope in achieving a desired goal (Shirom, 1989).

The symptoms of burnout spill over into other areas of the affected person's life affecting their performance, motivation, personal relationships and social life, and can lead to depression, anxiety and psychosomatic disorders, as well as destructive behaviours toward self and others (Brühlmann, 2011; Cartwright & Cooper, 1996).

According to the [NLP Communication Model](#), the way in which our minds have been conditioned to filter consciousness determines our personal experience of the world, including all our thoughts, feelings and behaviours. This phenomenon underlies why we are the way we are - influencing our health, relationships and finances, as well as our approach to stressful situations, including our potential for burnout. This article is the first in a series of articles on how to eliminate stress reactions from your life and how to avoid burnout, as well as recover from burnout.

The results of my [MSc research project](#) revealed that the causes of burnout might be related to an inhibited access to the more subtle levels of consciousness or constricted flow between levels of consciousness, which may in turn lead to what I refer to as "transpersonal burnout". Stephen Wright (2010, p.8) describes this condition aptly as a form of deep human suffering at every level – physical, psychological, social, spiritual – which occurs when old ways of being in the world no longer work and start to disintegrate. Transpersonal burnout is *soul sickness*, a condition that I sometimes think of as being stuck in mental mud and clueless about any solution. This state is characterised by a narrowing of awareness that prevents one from experiencing one's authentic self and utilising one's inner resources. Different stages of this condition are experienced as anxiety, fear, overwhelm,

frustration, and helplessness, – which can escalate to mental exhaustion, physical fatigue and emotional bankruptcy, including depression (Brühlmann, 2011; Shirom, 1989).

Transpersonal burnout (TpB) is triggered by stressful or intensely emotional experiences in our daily life, but the potential for it to be triggered most likely already exists in the unconscious awareness of such individuals. Furthermore, according to Stanislav Grof (2000), various emotional and psychosomatic disorders including TpB develop as a result of the reinforcing influence of traumatic events in our postnatal history, which in turn have roots in the perinatal, prenatal and transpersonal domains. If the seeds for potential TpB have been planted, the optimal fertile ground for TpB to manifest is often the perception of issues being unresolvable in valued relationships and/or a perceived loss of connection with one's intrinsic source of mental, emotional, physical and spiritual wellbeing. This kind of limiting perception, if triggered, can manifest into two different types of TpB, depending on the values of the individual.

The first type of TpB (TpB-1) can be identified in various contexts, for example,- the placement of significant value in external goals, fuelling materialism and causing overexertion amongst competitors as well as peers for the prestige of an acclaimed title or other acquisitions. This hypothesis further associates TpB-1 with the large scale of dysfunctional relationships in society,- from disharmony in the family, to personal relationship crises, and professional relationship stress, including the possibility of TpB-1 being an underlying factor in the breakdown of group relations and international conflict,- all contributing to substance abuse, self-harm, violence, power struggles, and segregation, for example (Dierendonck, Garssen & Visser, 2005). This condition is known to be contagious in organisations, being transferred from one employee to another (cited in Gonzalez-Morales, G., et al. 2012) and it can spread from one area of a persons' life to another infecting the people that one interacts with regularly (Brühlmann, 2011). Thomas Germiné (n.d) refers to David Bohm's (1994) impression of a society as one that has lost its connection with the implicate order (the infinite Unconscious), behaving like a set of disjointed mechanical fragments, one of which is oneself — this is TpB-1 on a large scale.

The second type of transpersonal burnout (TpB-2) can be compared to what Stan Grof and Christina Grof refer to as “Spiritual Emergency” (1989),- crises that emerge when the process of growth and change becomes chaotic and overwhelming. TpB-2 has also been compared to the *dark night of the soul*, which Eckhart Tolle (2011) refers to as a collapse of a perceived meaning in life. Wright refers to burnout as “a spiritual crisis on the way home” in the title of his 2010 book, with “home” being one’s state of spiritual well-being. TpB-2 is that stage of the dark night shortly before dawn through which the seeker of spiritual enlightenment must pass in order to wake up to the realisation that they are already “home”.

A common characteristic between those who suffer from TpB-1 and TpB-2 is that both are striving to achieve a goal that suddenly seems impossible, they become overwhelmed and they feel like they can’t go on in the same mode of operation, yet other modes are not conceivable or at least not favourable. Those experiencing TpB, regardless of the type, often lose touch with the initial source of inspiration that set them on their path, they become focussed on the doom and gloom of their crisis, and they lose hope. Steve Taylor (2013) refers to the point some people reach when the values and goals of a superficial and ordinary life don’t satisfy them anymore, when there is a yearning for something more, an impulse beneath the surface to find a more meaningful life, or to make contact with a deeper part of one’s own being. The incongruence between where one is and where one wants to be can surmount to intense personal suffering. I have found that those who don’t give up by resorting to external sources to temporarily alleviate their symptoms, eventually realise something of tremendous personal significance or learn something important about themselves, and as such the best way forward for these individuals is revealed sooner or later. Those who take a mindfulness approach seem to transition through their burnout phase more quickly and easily, additionally, those who have integrated mindfulness and meditation into their life appear to be less affected by burnout, or immune to it.

I have utilised [Open Awareness](#) over the past several years to help clients overcome both TpB-1 and TpB-2. The benefits of mindfulness in treating and preventing burnout is verified in Katz et al. (2005), who add that mindfulness approaches help to resolve old

wounds and unresolved issues, thereby indicating how mindfulness can address the cause of stress and burnout. Several of my clients, who while being guided through a mindfulness-based process were able to spontaneously recall distant memories that signified to these clients the root cause of their current issue. This confirms that the disposition for burnout to occur does often have causal links far back in the individual's personal history, as Grof (2000) suggests in similar examples. Mindfulness based healing interventions were used to heal the root cause for these individuals, and mindfulness practices were used by these individuals in order to integrate and sustain the healing in their present life. In every case the technique to facilitate OA proved to be pivotal in the healing process, as it provided these clients with a simple skill to open the aperture of their awareness. In other words, they learnt how to have an enhanced internal awareness of the quality of their own thoughts and emotions, while simultaneously having an improved external sensory awareness, plus at the same time activating their body's relaxation response and gaining a sense of interconnectivity with others. These aforementioned phenomena are associated with open awareness (Hanson, 2011; Overdurf, 2013) and prove to be a suitable mindfulness approach when dealing with both stress and burnout. With [OA](#) known to induce an open, receptive and calm state of consciousness, once integrated as an automatic response to the challenges of life, one can expect to experience a new quality of life, or as suggested by Walsh and Vaughan (1980), a raised perception of reality.

A mindfulness based lifestyle has been suggested by Niemiec, Rashid & Spinella, (2012) to cultivate productive engagement in work, an expanded sense of meaning and purpose, enhanced physical and psychological well-being, and improved relationships. Don't we all want that?

What makes you come truly Alive? What gets you into The Flow? What's your next step toward being This Person? Choose what makes you come Alive! Every step of the way!

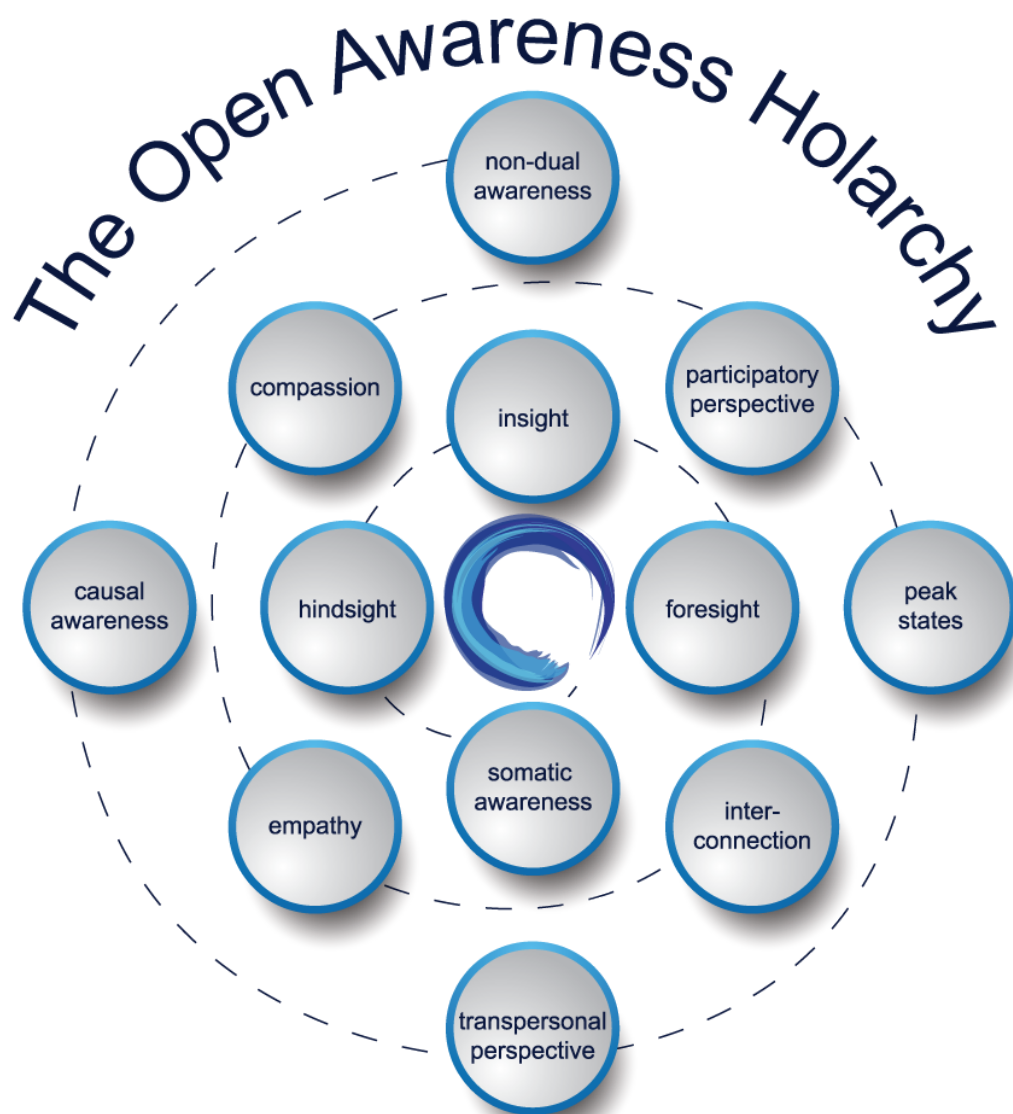
[The Burnout Self Diagnostic Tool](#)

References at end of book

The Open Awareness Holarchy

Open Awareness (OA) is a flowing moment of pure experience interconnected with the rest of reality – a Holarchy!

The OA Holarchy is a holistic system of interrelated states, perspectives and dimensions — that provides a theory of how the body, mind and spirit are connected.



A holarchy is a system composed of interrelated and interacting holons

A holon is something that is simultaneously a whole and a part of a larger whole (Koestler, A. 1967). Holons are influenced by and influence larger wholes. Similarly, since a holon is comprised of parts, it is also influenced by and influences these parts. When energy or information flow between holons within a system is compromised, for any reason, the system begins to break down. For example, holes might not recognize their dependence on the individual parts that they are comprised of, or parts might not recognize the larger holarchy in which they co-exist (Ibid). Cancer may be understood as such a breakdown within the body. Conflicts can arise because of such breakdowns in communication. Crises ensue when such breakdowns occur in one's psyche.

The [open awareness \(OA\)](#) techniques, such as [jumi](#), promote the embodied actualisation of oneself (and everyone) as interconnected holons within larger holarchies. To put it simply, we are all part of larger (collective and transpersonal) realities. These larger realities exist because each of us exists. An individual's personal reality is influenced by the state of the collective and transpersonal realities. Similarly, each individual's present state influences the overall state of the collective and transpersonal realities. Very simply, OA makes one more aware of their wholeness.

The three core dimensions (holons) of the Open Awareness Holarchy include:

Personal (embodied)

Typical states and perspectives: somatic awareness, hindsight, insight, foresight

Interpersonal (relational)

Typical states and perspectives: interconnection, empathy, compassion, participatory perspective

Transpersonal (spiritual)

Typical states and perspectives: peak states, transpersonal perspective, causal awareness, non-dual awareness

Characteristics of the OA experience

The following paragraphs briefly describe the typical states and/or perspectives (each one being a holon) that have been found to be associated with open awareness, as depicted in the OA Holarchy image above.

Somatic awareness

When beginning to practice OA, you may start by focusing your attention within the body, e.g., the feeling of the breath flowing into and out of the abdominal area. Through keeping the feeling of the breath in awareness, but simultaneously expanding your field of awareness to include the entire body, somatic awareness (awareness of sensations, emotional feelings and the overall state of the body) becomes enhanced.

Hindsight

With somatic awareness in a heightened state, you can more easily track specific sensations in the body or emotional feelings back to their 'roots'. One can also elicit from the sensations, emotional feelings, or one's overall state, what is required by the body in terms of health and healing outcomes.

Insight

OA quietens the inner 'chatter box' or 'monkey mind' and induces a state of calm mindfulness. From this state insights often arise, especially when one is seeking a solution to a problem, or wanting to increase the probability of gaining creative inspiration.

Foresight

With a still, present and timeless state of mind, sometimes realisations come into conscious awareness that pertain to potential experiences in your near or distant future. Such

foresights can serve as warnings and provide motivation to take certain actions. OA also equips you to more effectively visualise the outcomes that you would like to bring about in your future, thereby enhancing the possibility of achieving those outcomes.

Interconnection

OA promotes an expanded sense of self, in which you can experience a deep sense of everyone and everything being interconnected. Quantum physics and most major spiritual systems support this possibility. The universe can be viewed as a dynamic holarchy of interrelated holons, of which you are one. None of the properties of the holarchy are fundamental. They all follow from properties of the other holons and the overall consistency of their interrelations determines the structure of the entire holarchy.

Empathy

With a deep sense of everyone and everything being interconnected, empathy toward others flows naturally and effortlessly. You find yourself relating to people meaningfully, identifying their needs and values, as well as being able to truly hear and accept them without preconceived judgement.

Compassion

As your sense of connection with yourself and between you and others continues to deepen, compassion arises. For example, you may identify and feel how somebody is suffering, and you typically find yourself approaching them with more care and kindness.

Participatory perspective

Emerging from a deep realisation of your connection with everyone and everything, comes the participatory perspective. This view reveals the co creative quality of all events – from material to abstract and from personal to transpersonal.

Transpersonal Psychologist, Dr. Jorge Ferrer is well respected for his Participatory Vision of Spirituality. In his 2011 article, Ferrer writes: “...the participatory approach holds that human spirituality emerges from our co creative participation in a dynamic and undetermined mystery or generative power of life, the cosmos, and/or the spirit” (p 2). He suggests that spiritual co creation has three interrelated dimensions—intrapersonal, interpersonal, and transpersonal. These dimensions respectively establish participatory spirituality as “embodied (spirit within), relational (spirit in-between), and enactive (spirit beyond)” (p 3). Ferrer’s theory provides a significant rationale for the OA holarchy model.

Peak states

Feelings of aliveness, joy, bliss and flow describe the peak states of consciousness that can spontaneously arise from open awareness. You feel aligned within yourself and simultaneously connected to a vast and exquisite reality. Everything has meaning and value in such states. They are profoundly inspiring and can be transformative.

Transpersonal perspective

Transpersonal can be defined as “experiences in which the sense of identity or self extends beyond (trans) the individual or personal to encompass wider aspects of humankind, life, psyche or cosmos” (Walsh & Vaughn, 1993). It has also been described as “development beyond conventional, personal or individual levels” (Scotton, 1996). OA promotes a transpersonal perspective through expanding your sense of self beyond ego, integrating a more transcendent and holistic identity.

Causal Awareness

A transpersonal perspective involves becoming more aware of the causes of your present life circumstances: personality traits, behaviours, health, relationships (including how you relate to money), occupation, as well as your level of fulfilment, happiness, wellbeing, etc. The transpersonal realm can be thought of as the world of causes, and the material realm (your

body and regular circumstances) is the world of effects. Thoughts and emotions precede manifestation in the material realm, but what causes us to think and feel the way we do? With causal awareness you become more capable of tapping into the preconscious realm. This enables you to not only become more aware of what causes you to think, feel and behave the way you do, but also equips you to be a more conscious co-creator of your life circumstances.

Non-dual awareness

Non-dual means “not two”. This primordial state can be thought of as a highly developed state of consciousness, in which the dichotomy of I-other (subject-object) is transcended. In non-dual awareness the ego dissolves temporarily and the experience has been described as “pure openness”, “pure consciousness” and “pure being” (Fenner, 2011). Glimpses of non-dual awareness can spontaneously occur through being in open awareness, however, it is more commonly the result of prolonged meditation and contemplative practice. Nonetheless, OA itself can serve as a simple yet effective meditation and contemplative practice (E.G., Dangel, 2015 and Whenary, 2012).

A theory for how the body, mind and spirit are connected

The three dimensions of the OA Holarchy are each holons with subsidiary holons (expressed in terms of states and perspectives – as outlined above). These are all connected along a metaphorical spiraling continuum, rather than separate levels (as you can see in the diagram above). The spiral depicts the flow of immanent consciousness (bottom-up) and transcendent consciousness (top-down) as simultaneous throughout the holarchy. Seen through a *cartesian lens*, transcendent consciousness flows downward or inward from transpersonal to personal. Likewise, immanent consciousness flows upward or outward from personal to transpersonal. Looked at from a *participatory perspective*, both transcendent and immanent consciousness can stem from various co-arising sources along the spiraling continuum. As open awareness develops, eventually the concepts of inner and outer, as well as upper and lower lose significance. Ultimately, according to this model, we are all unique

and autonomous expressions of the 'Whole'. While undefinable in common language, the Whole might be described as both the source and the subject of everything in existence.

What does this mean to you?

Through practicing OA, one's consciousness becomes both 'embodied' and 'expanded' at the same time. This has potential healing, transformative and heuristic value; being the kinds of outcomes that my clients and course participants have reported since 2004, and which was evident in the research results documented in my dissertation (Dangeli, 2015).

In a nutshell, OA could be described as the process of bringing awareness into the 'space' in between yourself and that which you are experiencing in the moment (person, object, sensory perception, thought or feeling). As OA deepens, your experience of this space expands, the subject/object divide dissolves, and you become more aware of the subtler realms, including preconscious content.

Through practicing OA you learn to become comfortable with the unknown. You discover how to tap into the realm beyond your conscious awareness to lead a more productive and fulfilling life, or, perhaps most fundamentally, as Ferrer (2011) puts it: "participate more fully in the mystery out of which everything arises" (22).

[OA weekend events](#) and [online training](#) are available. OA is a fundamental approach taught in the [Authentic Self Empowerment Facilitator Training](#) and it is a central aspect of the [Transpersonal Coach Model](#).

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Jumi (Judo Mind)

Jumi promotes open awareness and healing by engaging the body in energy flowing movements and conscious breathing.

The Jumi Story

For a long time I played with the idea of combining my nearly 40 years of judo experience with the psychology and mindfulness exploration that I've engaged in for over 20 years. I was seeking a way to make the broader benefits of judo accessible to children and adults in all spheres of life. After a great deal of practice, testing and refinement, finally, jumi was established in 2017 out of the marriage of judo and mindfulness, inspired by the vision of open awareness around the world and equal possibilities for all to flourish.



Jumi combines the principles of judo with mindfulness, thus the word *jumi* is an acronym for *judo mind*, however there is more to it.

Judo means *the gentle way* in Japanese. This martial art was founded by Professor Jigoro Kano, based on the principles of effective use of energy – maximum efficiency with minimum effort, as well as mutual welfare and benefit.



“Ju” 柔 in Japanese stands for adaptability, agility and maximum efficiency with minimal effort.

“Mi” 実 has several meanings in Japanese, including: essence, reality, truth, and good results.

“Jumi” 柔実 directly translated means *pliability* (adaptable to change).



In order to be successful in any pursuit, one must be adaptable to change. Practising jumi develops mindful adaptability, which in turn promotes openness, flexibility and efficiency:

1. **open** to all aspects of your present reality, cultivating
2. **flexible** states and perspectives for
3. **efficient** actions leading to successful outcomes

The core objective of jumi is to develop and embody [open awareness](#). Through regular jumi practice, the state of OA can be integrated as an embodied trait, and thereby become your natural response in all types of situations.



In order to develop OA and have this state available in challenging situations, it needs to become embodied. Jumi has been created for the purpose of embodying open awareness.

Embodied OA leads to natural self-empowerment and a purposeful presence that is beneficial to those around you. This upholds Jigoro Kano principles of judo, transferring them from the dogo to the world.

While jumi serves as a mind-body practice by itself, it can also be used to compliment other integral practices. There are *jumi sequences* suitable for young to old, at any level of fitness and psycho-spiritual development.

Healing, Personal Development and Performance Enhancement with Jumi

Jumi has evolved quite rapidly over the past few years, as the practices have been adapted to various individual, pair and group needs. This has lead to refinements and new developments within the jumi approach, some of which are already being successfully applied by [open awareness facilitators](#), and some are still being tested. I've been consistently surprised at how profound the different jumi practices can be for individuals, both young and old, as well as for pairs and groups, as outlined below.

For Individuals

The majority of jumi practices can be done by oneself. These typically involve gentle physical movements (resembling a combination of yoga and qigong) in the form of [Jumi Sequences](#). Conscious breathing techniques are included to expand awareness and to cultivate vital energy, for example, the [Jumi Tree Breathing Techniques](#).



Through my own experience, including feedback from clients and students, we have found that jumi practice promotes the flow of healing energy and helps people to establish new (more whole, accepting and empowering) perspectives. The results have always been

positive and sometimes profound. Gaining meaningful insights, experiencing the release of emotional or energetic blockages, and feeling significant 'shifts' in the body are relatively common. Parents and school teachers have reported that their children and learners are more calm, engaged and receptive after a few minutes of playful jumi exercises.

While jumi serves as a mind-body practice by itself, it can also be used to compliment other integral practices. There are Jumi Sequences suitable for young to old, at any level of fitness and psycho-spiritual development. With regular practice jumi promotes:

- agility
- healing
- confidence
- mindfulness
- core strength
- concentration
- emotion regulation
- healthy self-esteem
- mind-body awareness
- performance enhancement

Relationship improvement for pairs

There are numerous interactive jumi exercises that can be done in pairs. These are known to enhance awareness of the unconscious dynamics that influence the current state of our relationships – at home, at work and socially. Jumi practiced in pairs promotes the realisation of the different



levels and qualities of connection that constitute our relationships. This, in turn, helps pairs to establish a deeper rapport, entailing empathy, compassion and open communication.

Performance enhancement for groups and teams

Jumi can also be practiced among groups and teams by means of interactive exercises and games. Group activities can reveal how each individual typically 'shows up' or 'shys away', whilst promoting inclusivity and integration in a fun, yet effective, way. In professional teams, these activities can help to improve team coherence and performance.



Jumi For The World

Since jumi doesn't belong to any tradition, religion or culture; it is unbounded and available across the world. Practicing jumi helps individuals, pairs and groups to develop open awareness, which, among other benefits, promotes a deep sense of interconnection. When we feel deeply interconnected with each other and with everything in nature, we won't be inclined to do each other any harm, nor will we destroy the environment.



I believe that when open awareness becomes an embodied trait (with the help of jumi practices) in our personal lives, in our relationships, in our groups, and eventually, maybe, in societies around the world; we'll start to see a world in which there is mutual respect, more harmony and equal possibilities for all to flourish. This is an ideal that I aspire to. For this reason, jumi is a calling for me, and therefore I am committed to making this burgeoning

method of establishing open awareness widely known and practiced.

Free Jumi Resources

The Basic Jumi Tree Breathing Technique is included in the next chapter of this handbook and all available jumi resources (including videos of demonstrations) are freely available at <https://jumi.live>



Open Awareness

Seeing with New Eyes

Chapter 2

Open Awareness Tips and Techniques

This chapter includes practical OA skills that can be used for Self-discovery, or applied in various contexts, including situations in which a more resourceful state or broader perspective is desired.

The Basic Jumi Tree Breathing Technique

Jumi Tree Breathing Techniques can be used to reduce stress, anxiety, fear and emotional reactions, as well as to enhance your healing and manifesting potential. These unique conscious breathing techniques can also serve to explore the self and beyond the self, i.e., transpersonal levels.

The Basic Jumi Tree Breathing Technique (JTBT)

Note before starting:

- The Basic JTBT can be done seated (with an upright back) or standing (with feet shoulder-width apart, knees slightly bent and hips tilted slightly forward).
- The Basic JTBT involves inhaling naturally through the nose and exhaling slowly from the mouth.
- JTBT can include any amount of breath repetitions per set, although seven breath repetitions are recommended per set when following a [Jumi Sequence](#) with a JTBT.
- Allow your hands to rest lightly on the lower abdominal area – slightly below the navel – for the duration of the session.
- You can actively imagine that you are a strong and flourishing tree throughout the session, or you can passively allow the metaphor of a tree to enhance your experience.
- There are specialized versions of the JTBT used in coaching and therapy in which one's eyes sometimes remain open, but for the Basic JTBT outlined below, one's eyes

should be closed at the beginning and opened again near the end (as described in Set 10).

- Should you feel dizzy or unwell during a JTBT session, end the session by sitting down and breathing gently in your preferred way. Open your eyes and consciously connect the soles of your feet with the ground.
- For a video in which the Basic JTBT is demonstrated, visit <https://jumi.live/jumi-tree-breathing-technique/>

The Basic Jumi Tree Breathing Technique - applying seven breath repetitions per set:

1. Set 1 – As you inhale through your nose, imagine that you are drawing vital energy into the abdominal area (the core of the tree) where your hands rest. As you exhale from your mouth, surround your body in awareness – sensing the entire volume of space that your body (the whole tree) occupies.
2. Set 2 – As you inhale through your nose, imagine that you are drawing vital energy into the core of your body/tree where your hands rest. As you exhale from your mouth, imagine sending roots of awareness down from the soles of your feet into the earth. With each exhalation visualize and feel roots of awareness extending from your feet down deep into the earth. With each inhalation in this set imagine absorbing earth frequency into your body/tree.

Between sets (from this point onward), use one inhalation and exhalation to center your awareness in the core of your body/tree.

3. Set 3 – As you exhale from your mouth, send branches of awareness out in front of you. Visualize and feel branches of awareness extending to the front - all the way to the boundary of the space in which you are, or to the horizon in front of you.

Center your awareness in the core of your body/tree.

4. Set 4 – As you exhale from your mouth, send branches of awareness out to your right – all the way to the boundary of the space in which you are, or to the horizon on your right.

Center your awareness in the core of your body/tree.

5. Set 5 – As you exhale from your mouth, send branches of awareness out behind you – all the way to the boundary of the space in which you are, or to the horizon behind you.

Center your awareness in the core of your body/tree.

6. Set 6 – As you exhale from your mouth, send branches of awareness out to your left – all the way to the boundary of the space in which you are, or to the horizon on your left.

Center your awareness in the core of your body/tree.

7. Set 7 – As you exhale from your mouth, send your core/trunk of awareness out above you – all the way to the ceiling of the space in which you are, or into the vast sky above you. To enhance the experience, with each exhalation in this set you can imagine your core/trunk of awareness extending further and further toward your source of your 'aliveness' in life.

Center your awareness in the core of your body/tree.

8. Set 8 – As you exhale from your mouth, send your roots, trunk and branches of awareness out in all respective directions simultaneously. Sense your complete

body/tree of your awareness expanding in all directions – filling the entire space in which you are or expanding infinitely beyond time and space.

9. Set 9 – Begin to embody your expanded state by inhaling into the core of your body/tree and exhaling throughout – sensing the entire volume of space that your whole body/tree occupies.
10. Set 10 – Slowly allow your eyes to open and repeat another set of inhalations into the core of your body and exhalations throughout – sensing the entire volume of space that your whole body occupies.

Finish – Breathe naturally. Release your hands from their position and allow them to connect with any part of your body intuitively or to move freely for a minute. Consciously connect the soles of your feet with the ground before engaging in your next activity.

After the JTBT session:

- JTBT may have a healing and detoxifying effect, therefore drinking plenty of water or cleansing fluids after each session is recommended.
- It is normal to feel slightly light-headed or disoriented after a JTBT session when you are new to it. Sooner or later, sessions typically result in feeling inspired, vitalized and meaningfully connected with life!

To watch a video of the Basic JTBT being demonstrated, visit

<https://jumi.live/jumi-tree-breathing-technique/>

Introduction to the Open Awareness Techniques

Open Awareness is a particular mode of perception that can be established through various means. These means generally begin by identifying one's present experience of self, by first focusing attention through the senses, then noticing thoughts and emotions, and then bringing awareness to the context or relationship that allows for one's current experience.

OA could be described as the process of bringing attention into the space in between yourself and that which you are experiencing in the moment (object, sensory perception, thought or feeling). As OA deepens, your experience of this space expands, the subject/object divide dissolves, and the more subtle realms come into awareness.

When learning the skill for the first time, it is useful to first focus on the more apparent experiences and then progress to the more subtle experiences that occur to one in the present. Most often the process begins through focusing either on the visual, or auditory, or somatic experiences as they unfold from moment to moment. One of these three sensory modalities is selected and paid attention to, then that particular sensory field is extended to include more of what is occurring in the background. This process continues as a steady progression until the periphery of that sensory field is extended as far as it can naturally and effortlessly go.

While this *extending* of awareness is imagined and therefore subjective, the object here is not to pretend that one is having any particular kind of experience, but rather to prime one's consciousness in order to bring forth more of what is present in the background of awareness. In this manner, one's awareness can continue expanding toward the extremities of space and time until eventually there is no identification with any form at all.

Although one's experience at any stage or level remains subjective, the process of establishing open awareness (as outlined above) can have a profoundly healing or

transformative effect on the individual. After extending the awareness outward, it is embodied in the physical form once again through re-focusing awareness back into the abdominal area. In this way, insights arising from the expanded mind become integrated in order for inspired ideas, or solutions to problems, or empowered states to be present – as and when required.

It should be noted that this kind of consciously chosen starting point followed by a progressive extending of the awareness, which denotes a separate interior and exterior to the individual, is only one means of establishing OA. After some practice, people are able to “drop into” OA at the mere intention to do so. What is *dropped into*, is a calm state where one experiences oneself as fundamentally interconnected with the rest of life, which in turn cultivates resourcefulness and compassion.

The skill of OA may well be a practical antidote to the attention slavery that we are all subject to. Dissolve stressful thoughts and enhance mental performance with one simple skill – *opening the aperture of your awareness*.

Varieties of Open Awareness

Open Awareness can be established through a variety of means. These include combinations of visual, auditory and somatic approaches – which are used as starting points in order to establish the multi-sensory experience of OA – which can then be extended to include more subtle (e.g. psychic and spiritual) experiences and even a sense of interconnectivity with everything in existence. These various starting points are there so that open awareness can be achieved by all sorts of people. In this way the skill of OA can be easily learned and taught. The following are examples of the three common starting points to achieving OA.

Open vision:

Fixate your gaze on any object and then gradually broaden your visual field to include more and more of what is completely to the left and right of your visual field of awareness. It

should be noted that the objects in your periphery do remain out of focus and therefore somewhat hazy. The object is not to try and see more, but rather to allow your visual field to include what is over in both the extremities of your visual field, on the left and right simultaneously.

Open hearing:

Close your eyes and pay attention to what you hear going on in the environment around you. Progressively include more attention to the sounds that are further away. Then bring the idea into awareness that you are only able to hear the sounds around you and far away due to the fact that your awareness has extended out to those points. In other words, you hear those sounds occurring within your awareness, therefore you can experience the sources of those sounds (near and far) within you (to some degree). If, for example, a helicopter passes by, you hear that sound within your awareness and as such your awareness can be experienced as extended in all directions as far as that helicopter (which then draws your attention further out as it flies further away).

Allow yourself to experience your extended awareness such that it is not merely your auditory sense detecting sounds from afar, but rather your sense of self that has extended so that what was experienced far outside of you is now experienced within 'you'.

Open soma awareness:

Start by focussing on the rising and releasing of the belly with each inhalation and exhalation. Next, extend the rising and releasing experience to include your entire torso for a few breaths and then the entire body. After experiencing the rising and releasing of the entire body for a few breaths, as if the entire body was breathing, you then extend your awareness to surround your body (like a permeable cocoon) while being aware of how the body feels at the same time. The breathing entity is then felt as both the body and the field of awareness that surrounds it. This breathing field of awareness is then extended progressively with each inhalation, until it includes other people and objects in your

immediate environment. Following that, you can extend the awareness to include people and objects that are anywhere at any time (past, present or future)

Notes:

- Once open awareness has been established, you will have probably activated alpha brain waves and be more in touch with your unconscious resources.
- The above three starting point examples can be blended to enrich the experience. It is not necessary to extend open awareness further than what is required in order to achieve your desired result.
- Those beginning to learn open awareness usually experience it as a trance like state, however your conscious awareness remains fully present throughout the process. Once familiar with open awareness, it is experienced more as mindfulness (relaxed but highly alert and with a sense of interconnectivity) which then enables you to activate and utilise it in all contexts.
- The establishment of open awareness should precede all other psychological interventions and can be utilised as a means of intervention by itself (i.e., to neutralise negative triggers).
- Psychology practitioners (including coaches, therapists and counsellors) should always calibrate carefully to their client's present state, as this provides the feedback which determines the pace of the process and the extent to which it should go. Always make sure that the client is comfortable and benefitting from the process.
- After practicing open awareness, return to your original object of attention and ensure that you feel reorientated (body centred) before continuing with your normal activities.

Walking in Open Awareness exercises

The following four exercises may be more effective when done in a natural environment, as opposed to an urban area or indoors.

1. Basic exercise:

While walking, allow your attention to be drawn to whatever passes in the periphery of your visual field. Naturally you will also be aware of what's ahead of you and where you are placing your feet, however, this should not be the main focus of your attention. There's nothing specific to focus on, simply pay attention to whatever it is that passes by in both the left and right of your visual field. Do this for 5 minutes and notice the effect on your present state.

2. Activating unconscious resources and/or overcoming mental blocks exercise:

1. Before beginning your walk, pause and reflect on the issue where you require a solution.
2. Then clear that thought and decide by when you expect to have the solution, for example after 5 minutes of walking or by the time you reach your chosen destination.
3. Clear your mind again and begin walking in open awareness. Should your mind drift, bring your attention back to whatever it is that passes by in both the left and right of your visual field.
4. Upon arrival at your destination, or after more or less your given time frame, pause and hold the intention for your solution to arise into conscious awareness. Perhaps you will get the 'perfect answer' or perhaps the answer will be a practical step that

moves you toward your desired outcome. You might need to extend your destination or time frame in the event that no solution comes to mind.

3. Resolving relationship issues while walking in OA:

1. Bring the person to mind with whom you have a relationship issue that you would like to resolve.
2. Hold a soft representation of that individual in front of you and begin walking – while keeping your attention on whatever it is that passes by in both the left and right of your visual field.
3. While almost all of your attention should remain in your periphery, as you walk, notice any changes in the representation of the person that you have in mind, or changes in the way you feel toward him/her.
4. Keep going until you are satisfied with the new way in which you are perceiving that person, or a satisfying idea has come to mind in regard to how you want to approach the relationship issue.

4. OA walking meditation:

1. Before beginning, take a few comforting breaths and then establish open awareness.
2. Begin walking mindfully (slowly and attentively) – aware of each muscular movement that propels your body forward, aware of passing thoughts and feelings, aware of your passing environment, aware of the degree to which you are in open awareness (or not) – all with effortlessness.
3. If you are distracted, pause your walking, return to open awareness, and continue as above.

The walking meditation is recommended to be done at least once daily for a minimum of five minutes. 20 – 30 minutes is ideal (and longer is fine too).

How to Deal with Difficult People and Improve Your Relationships

This article introduces ideas that can help to broaden your perspectives as well as shift perceptual positions, no matter how complicated your interaction with another may be. With a broader view and a multiple perception stand-point you will have greater freedom to choose mindful responses in any type of interaction with people.

You are the only one who is responsible for your happiness.

When we feel emotionally affected by someone it's because something that already exists inside us was triggered by that person. When we deal with what's inside us then we no longer get triggered in the same way. We then stop blaming others for doing things to us. We see that the way they are is a reflection of their level of awareness and this enables us to remain resourceful and compassionate toward them.

The only way other people, including your family and friends exist for you is through your perceptions. Our perceptions determine how we behave. Our behaviour influences the behaviour of those with whom we interact, which in turn influences our perception about them. And so the cycle goes... In other words, the way in which people behave validates our perception of them, and so we always get to be right. Therefore, our perceptions become self-fulfilling prophecies that keep recycling in our life.

Perceptions are subjective and therefore relationships can be seen as a process of intersubjective responses between people. Our perceptions of others (especially the important people in our life) often mirror the unconscious qualities of our own personality, which is what we're not aware of in ourselves. In this sense we generally experience and judge others according to the internal representation of ourselves.

Problems occur in relationships when you get stuck in your point of view. When you refuse to see the situation from the other person's perspective as well as from a more distant (observer) perspective, therefore only seeing it from your own map of reality, then conflicts are inevitable. Being able to shift perspectives between your position and another's position and an observer position frees you from preconceived judgments toward others, which in turn fosters better communication, understanding, respect, compassion and harmony in that relationship. OA *streamlines* the process.

This doesn't mean that you stick around in an unwanted or abusive relationship. It means that you become empowered to act from a broader perspective of what is really going on. You are able to choose what is in your best interest and move in that direction without resentment or negativity or any sense of loss.

You're only responsible for your own thoughts, feelings and behaviours. When we try to change other people's thoughts, feelings and behaviours it often leads to disappointment and suffering. Changing your point of view (e.g., from tunnel awareness to OA) and therefore your ability to respond differently in a relationship is the best chance you have of having a happy, healthy and successful partnership.

Fulfilment in relationships means not depending on someone else. Fulfilment is the privilege of an open mind and flexible points of view (open awareness). When we realize that at a deep level we are interconnected not only with our loved ones, but also with everyone and everything in nature, then we begin to treat others the way we would like to be treated.

It's important to take responsibility for your feelings and to articulate them. When describing your feelings, choose words that express what you are experiencing, as in "I feel sad, lonely, frustrated, jealous." Avoid using words that reinforce your sense of victimization, such as "I feel neglected, rejected, betrayed." Avoid judging others, you are informing them about your feelings, rather than blaming them for something that only you are responsible for anyway. Practice the discipline of observing your internal reactions in relation to people with whom you'd like to interact more positively or resourcefully. This enables you to loosen your identification with thoughts like: "He shouldn't have done that"; "She should be more

understanding”; “Him saying that means he doesn’t care for me”; etc. Observing your thoughts in this way also enables you to more easily shift your attention away from limiting perceptions and identify with broader views that show you a greater truth. Look beyond the person whom you want to relate to better.

Open the [aperture of your awareness](#) by focussing not only on the person that you’re communicating with, but also on the space around them, as well as the space (or energy) that connects you with that person. If you can’t see their entire body, then you might be too much ‘in their face’. Also, by broadening your perceptual field and softening your gaze, you are able to relate to the whole human being in front of you rather than just their title.

Implementing the ideas shared in this article will enable you to change your own perception so that you can experience others with greater equanimity. Taking this mindfulness approach toward the people in your life affords you the freedom to experience more fulfilling relationships.

Remember: You are the only one who is responsible for your happiness!

OA technique - general approach 1:

Keep your head facing forward and eyes open throughout the following 6 steps:

1. Extend your visual field of awareness as far as possible to the left and right simultaneously.
2. Sense the entire volume of space that your whole body occupies.
3. Notice the pauses or space between your breaths (continue for at least 30 seconds).
4. Identify the pauses or space between your thoughts (continue for at least 30 seconds).
5. Become aware of the *space* out of which everything you experience emerges.
6. Experience the *space* that connects you to everyone and everything in existence.

End by focussing on your breath for at least 30 seconds.

OA technique - general approach 2:

Keep your head facing forward and eyes open throughout the following 6 steps:

1. Extend your visual field of awareness as far as possible to the left and right simultaneously.
2. Expand your field of awareness all around you and sense the entire volume of space that your whole body occupies.
3. Notice the pauses or space between your breaths (continue for at least 30 seconds).
4. Bring awareness into the *space* between you, all people and everything in the area.
5. Notice how your breath connects you to the unlimited and unifying *space* that we all share.
6. Observe your moment to moment experience from the perspective of *space* itself.

End by focussing on your breath for at least 30 seconds.

OA technique for solving problems

Setup: Think about a situation in which you are experiencing a problem. After considering that, take a big breath in and out to clear your mind. If that situation could be completely resolved, what would be your desired outcome? With that outcome in mind...

1. Start by completing one of the OA general approaches from above.
2. Imagine that you can look down at yourself in that situation from high up and far away. Get the big picture! Notice how your current experience fits into the greater scheme of things.
3. From this point of view what can you learn? How many more options do you have? What can you do differently?
4. Now, with your new understanding and perspective in awareness, what is the next smallest step that you can take which leads toward your desired outcome?
5. Imagine taking that next step and feeling good about it.
6. Take a few deep breaths, open your eyes and look forward to fulfilling results.

OA for creative inspiration and core empowerment

Setup: We've all had the experience of eventually overcoming what used to be a problem. "Time heals" - therefore it is probable that in the future we will overcome our current challenges. The following process entails the creative visualization of going to the future, connecting with relevant learnings and understanding, then bringing those new insights and perspectives back to the present! This is a fun and empowering process...

1. Bring your challenging situation into awareness.
2. How are you experiencing this issue right now?
3. After considering that, take a big breath in and out to clear your mind.
4. Before continuing to step 5, complete one of the OA general approaches from above.
5. Now imagine your awareness floating out into the future... all the way to the point where you've outgrown that issue and become totally resourceful.
6. Imagine being in this future now. Become aware of the learnings, insights and resources that are available to you in your future.
7. Look back from your future toward your present and notice how your current situation is unfolding in order for you to move toward the future that awaits you.
8. Now... what's the next smallest step that you can take which leads toward your desired outcome?
9. Imagine taking that next step and feeling good about it.
10. Take a few deep breaths, open your eyes and look forward to fulfilling results.

Open awareness for cultivating empathy and compassion

Applicable for parents, teachers, leaders, coaches, therapists and anyone who wants to be fully present and of value with significance to others:

1. Start by focussing on the space between you and the other(s).
2. Sense the entire volume of space that your whole body occupies.
3. Intentionally expand your awareness to embrace both yourself and the other(s) within your encompassing space of awareness.
4. Notice how everything that you experience, including the other(s), is within your held space of awareness.
5. Bring an appropriate intention into the held space, i.e., to be of value or service in a way that is meaningful to the other(s).

Allow ideas or decisions to arise in your awareness from the held space, and allow these to be expressed in whichever way is most appropriate in that context.

Eliminating Panic Attacks & Performance Anxiety with OA

Be free of panic attacks and performance anxiety with this simple 2-step technique...

STEP 1: Open the aperture of your awareness

Broaden your current perspective in order to see the *bigger picture* and experience an expanded sense of self. For this, either of the two general OA techniques (outlined on page 22) should suffice.

For panic attacks or performance anxiety to occur, you need to keep your attention on something that causes you to have the unwanted thoughts and feelings. In such cases attention is fixated (tunnel awareness) either on the undesired aspect of the situation that's unfolding, or the negative self talk that's running in our mind, or both. In both scenarios, the skill of [open awareness](#) immediately inhibits the body's stress mode (fight or flight) and calms the mind.



By practicing the OA techniques regularly (at least once per day for a week), you will begin to find that you can drop into the state of open awareness quite swiftly and effortlessly. The more you practice it, the more it becomes your natural reflex in challenging situations (which is when you need it most).

STEP 2: Roll out the red carpet

Welcome each and every aspect of your current experience as it is. What we resist persists, so make sure that you are not resisting anything. I know it sounds crazy to welcome panic or anxiety, but trust me, this works! You simply imagine rolling out a red carpet and whole-heartedly welcome your experience like a VIP guest. Whatever symptom you are experiencing, let it be, welcome it! Doing this drains the energy from panic attacks and performance anxiety.



IMPORTANT:

Open awareness goes hand-in-hand with the red carpet skill/attitude. If you are in tunnel awareness then the red carpet metaphor might not be as effective.

Open awareness must be practiced in order for it to become *embodied*. Only once it is embodied does it become easy to apply in times of need. In each practice session first establish [open awareness](#) and then add in the red carpet metaphor (and make each practice session fun and light-hearted). Sooner or later you may find that what used to trigger those old panicky feelings begins to lose its grip on you, since your unconscious mind knows that you can easily deal with those triggers should they show up.

Summary

STEP 1: Open the aperture of your awareness

Establish open awareness.

STEP 2: Roll out the red carpet

Welcome your experience like a VIP guest.

You might be surprised at how well this simple 2-step technique can work for you. It's safe, effective and fun!

Note: Sometimes panic attacks or performance anxiety occur as a result of severe traumatic events in one's past, for which there are additional steps required to [heal the 'root cause'](#). If you feel that your level of panic or anxiety is too intense to take care of yourself, then consider a private consultation with [Jevon](#) (via Skype).

Related article: To read about how Jevon used a technique like the one above to save his own life in a medical crisis, [read here](#).

Emotionally Intelligent Self Leadership through OA

What's the wisdom of your body telling you right now?

When you find yourself feeling distress or wanting to react to “negative” emotions - close your eyes, take a few deep breaths and feel the sensations in your body. Shift your attention off your thought-stream and avoid labelling the feeling or emotion, just observe your direct experience of it.

While feeling the sensations in your body, simultaneously become aware of your body as a whole. Expand your field of awareness all around you and sense the entire volume of space that your whole body occupies. In this way you allow any unwanted energy to pass instead of boxing it, or trapping it through attempts to resist or suppress it.

Welcome emotional feelings and their lessons. Be mindful of any need to react, but avoid the temptation of knee-jerk reactions or jumping to conclusions. Everything happens for a reason and the key to gaining a constructive learning out of your experience is through how it makes you feel. You will know you've got the learning when you feel better and that type of issue no longer recycles in your life.

Discipline yourself to only respond to a challenging situation once the unpleasant emotion has passed. The emotional state behind your behaviour is what influences your effectiveness and attracts more of the same.

In choosing to witness (through OA) our unpleasant feelings and reactive thoughts without identifying with them, we become less overwhelmed by them and more aware of our unconscious instincts. This awareness allows us to make more clear and conscious choices about each situation in our life.

Regular practice of this skill is a useful way of “tuning in” and becoming familiar with the inner workings of your higher intelligence.

This approach to dealing with the emotional challenges promotes Emotionally Intelligent Self Leadership – and all effective leadership begins with self-leadership.

From Victim to Victory in One Step!

Feeling victimized, belittled or undervalued can be debilitating. It can activate survival mode, self-sabotaging behaviors, or people pleasing mechanisms that eventually deplete the soul. Behind it all is a limited mode of perception in which your sense of self has shrunk or shriveled.

A simple yet effective skill to shift this mode of perception is to expand your sense of self, opening the aperture of your awareness and reconnecting to your source of aliveness.

Here's how to do it:

Become aware of the entire volume of space that your whole body occupies.

That's it!

OK, there's a little more to it....

While you're focusing on the space that surrounds you, notice that it's the same space that you're currently breathing, so it's also the space that fills you. Spend a few moments sensing and exploring the space of you. The more you do this, the more you'll start to identify that the space in which you live your life is unlimited. Eventually the realization comes - you are unlimited. Victory!

This simple open awareness skill enables you to embody your unlimited nature a little more each time you practice it, thereby developing your immunity to feelings of victimization and other debilitating states.

There you have it, one step from victim to victory!

Choose to be victorious!



Chapter 3

Open Awareness – Holding The Space

The content in this chapter of the OA Handbook is intended for practitioners such as coaches, therapists, counsellors, health-care professionals, social workers, teachers, trainers, leaders, change facilitators and others who aim to be of value and service to individuals and groups.

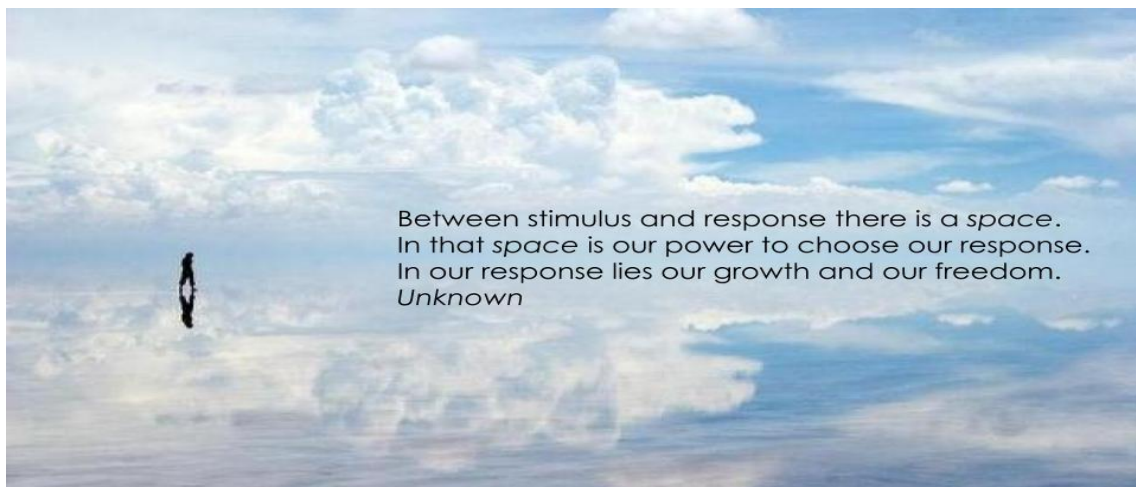
Holding the Liminal Space in Coaching and Life

(Adapted from an essay written for the Integral Transpersonal Journal)

by Jevon Dangeli and Dr Hennie Geldenhuys

“Holding The Space” is the metaphorical container for the interaction between the practitioner and the client. It is a phenomenon commonly and anecdotally described by coaches, therapists, counsellors and healthcare practitioners in the caring and healing disciplines. This is especially true in the transpersonal setting. Despite the popularity of the term and wide anecdotal recognition of its importance, its character remains numinous and its description in the academic literature elusive. Although Holding The Space is largely experiential and intuitive, transpersonal practitioners, coaches and therapists are presented with a challenge: examining and describing this *space*, in order to research and teach it, develop the skill, and make it consistently reproducible in practice.

In this article, we explore the concept of Holding The Space, and then propose a simple yet effective method for facilitating the state in coaching and therapy. “Open Awareness” is a calm and receptive state of applied mindful awareness with aspects of introspective, extrospective and somatic awareness, accompanied by a sense of interconnectedness, compassion and a presence in the space-in-between (Dangeli, 2015).



The nature of “Holding the Space”

The *held space* has been described as a liminal space that is open, receptive and emergent and that promotes transpersonal knowing (Dangeli, 2017). Liminal relates to a transitional process or something that occupies a position at, or on both sides of, a boundary or threshold (Liminal, n.d.). It is the co-created medium in which coaching or therapy is performed that facilitates exploration, discovery and healing in a safe and responsive setting. In transpersonal interventions, this includes the freedom to access altered states of consciousness; experience of the physical, emotional and spiritual self; the psyche's shadow; interpersonal dynamics; and perceptions of interconnectedness beyond one's self constructs. Components of Holding The Space include rapport and mutual resonance (Bandler & Grinder, 1976; Siegel, 2013), a participatory perspective (Ferrer & Sherman, 2011), mindfulness (Siegel 2010) and intentional attitudes such as unconditional acceptance and beneficence (Watson, 2004). In a coaching and therapy context, we propose to add a further dimension, namely a state of conscious awareness that moves the client as well as the coach or therapist away from a fixated tunnel awareness, to a state of openness, receptivity and equanimity.

The concept of *spiritual resonance* between the coach and their client is an important one for the transpersonal practitioner. In the therapeutic intervention there is an expanded awareness in which the boundaries between individuals and objects become more diffuse, ego identification is less prominent and a sense of mutuality between all things is fostered (Siegel, 2013). In the transpersonal context, this resonance allows a medium in which more subtle and abstract emotional and spiritual experiences can be detected, stabilized and explored toward integration and healing. One might consider this an “energetic joining” between client and practitioner (Siegel, 2013). A receptivity of this nature on the part of the practitioner is intuitive, but it is likely that the conditions for it to develop can be created through the induction of a specific state of awareness. A joint reciprocal state of awareness of this kind is the transpersonal equivalent of rapport originally described in other disciplines such as Neuro-Linguistic Programming (Bandler & Grinder, 1976). Rapport could be

considered an unconscious empathetic relationship and the ability to relate to others in a way that creates trust and understanding (Overdurf & Silverthorn, 1995).

Dr Jorge Ferrer's participatory vision of spirituality (Ferrer & Sherman, 2011) finds pragmatic application in the held space. Ferrer writes that "the participatory approach holds that human spirituality emerges from our co-creative participation in a dynamic and undetermined mystery or generative power of life, the cosmos and spirit" (2011, p2). The capacity to facilitate a dynamic setting in which this participatory vision finds manifestation is a core skill in both transpersonal coaching and therapy. The skill is one of intentional receptiveness and openness to an unfolding shared narrative on the personal, interpersonal and transpersonal levels. This merged and co-creative mode of interaction is an evolution of the traditional mechanistic relationship between practitioner and client. It allows multiple perspectives to contribute to the common therapeutic space, extending beyond the client and practitioner, to include other people, other entities and other dimensions of reality.

What is the role of mindfulness in Holding The Space? If we recognize that at least both the practitioner and client contribute to that dynamic space, and that the subtle resonance between practitioner, client and all the other entities in the space influence the outcome, how can the practitioner maintain an awareness of all those energetic factors? The answer may be in a particular type of mindfulness. Dan Siegel, referring to the role of mindfulness within the psychotherapeutic container, observes that:

Resonance makes two a part of one system, at least temporarily.
Attuning to ourselves within mindful states, we have the observing
and experiencing self in resonance. Attuning to others, we open
ourselves to the profound adventure of linking two as part of one
interactive whole (Siegel, 2010, p55).

Mindfulness of what is happening inside the coach, inside the client, and in the co-created space in between them, may be the difference between a random, chaotic or confounded outcome of a session, and a more facilitated, applied and useful outcome. The coach or

therapist needs to be sensitive to the myriad of factors at play in the session, some preconscious, not all from the client only, many not obvious, and changing all the time. An attempt to track these factors cognitively is likely doomed to failure, whereas the mindful state allows a continuous, holistic intuitive processing through the active, non-judgmental moment-to-moment awareness of mindfulness (Kabat-Zinn, 2003).

Another aspect of Holding The Space is an intentional attitude of unconditional acceptance and beneficence. This dimension is a well recognized cornerstone of any therapeutic relationship in all branches of psychology, coaching and caring (Watson, 2004). Watson, writing in the context of the caring nursing relationship (2004), not only identifies this deep sense of compassion, but also explores the intentionality with which it needs to be cultivated by the practitioner. In the transpersonal context, this may find expression in certain meta-states that the coach enters and cultivates in order for them to become ingrained, intuitive and automatic, such as compassion and loving-kindness. By no accident, these are qualities valued by the contemplative traditions including meditation and mindfulness (Hanson, 2011). The intention of these qualities is not in forcing or pretending in a superficial way, but in purposefully participating in a process that allows access to these humanistic traits, and integrating them to prominence in the space.

In addition to the recognized qualities of the held space discussed above, we propose that developing a sense of interconnectedness not only enhances the therapeutic relationship and resonance, but in and of itself is a constructive intervention. Clients become clients because their attention is fixated in a narrow mode of perception and they have lost the capacity to grasp a balanced, wider and more holistic perspective. The client's thought and emotional patterns, as well as their experience of spirituality may be *locked into* a rigid set of preconceptions, triggers or ingrained habitual responses (Bandler & Grinder, 1976). We propose that this phenomenon is so common in coaching and therapeutic settings that the faculty of Holding The Space needs to include a priori the facilitation of expanding the client's state of awareness from their metaphorical tunnel awareness toward a more open awareness.

In summary, the important skill of “Holding the Space” in a transpersonal coaching setting has a number of components which include: 1) resonance and rapport; 2) a participatory vision; 3) mindfulness; 4) intentional attitudes of acceptance, compassion and loving-kindness; and 5) opening the *aperture* of one’s awareness as an antidote to tunnel awareness. In the following section, we propose a methodology called “Open Awareness” for maintaining a state of awareness that includes all of these components.

The nature of Open Awareness

Open Awareness is a distinct state of awareness characterized by Dangeli (2015):

- a mindful mode of perception
- a calm and receptive emotional and mental state
- metacognitive introspective awareness in which the mind can observe its own state and activities - an awareness of the mind itself
- extrospective awareness - heightened sensory and somatic perceptions
- a reframe of one’s current experience of oneself, placing perceived phenomena within one’s frame of reference (as opposed to these being experienced outside of oneself) leading to a sense of interconnection and compassion
- balance and adaptation between conscious focused attention and peripheral sensory awareness
- a flexible, fluid and dynamic state, enabling one to access a variety of channels of perception through intent and appropriateness to the current context

Open Awareness involves the intentional observation of one’s thoughts, feelings and sensory perceptions in the present moment through opening the *aperture* of one’s awareness. In addition to identifying the subtleties of one’s internal experience, Open Awareness includes becoming receptive to the energetic and relational links between oneself and others and the environment. To varying degrees, the individual experiences a felt sense of expansiveness and interconnection resulting from disidentification from their limited self-concepts. Open Awareness is more than a technique, it is a natural mode of being that can be tapped into

and intentionally cultivated. Someone in Open Awareness is non-reactive, equanimous, aware of inner and outer processes and has a deep sense of interconnectedness.

Open Awareness is often described as an expanded and receptive consciousness (Dangeli, 2015). There is a balance between cognition and intuition, between action and acceptance, and between the sensory and the conceptual. On a transpersonal level, the coach or therapist in Open Awareness intuitively taps into the dynamic space that is co-created by practitioner and client, and is receptive to subtle shifts in energy, facial expressions, body sensations, and other variables. Importantly, the practitioner is also sensitive to his or her own shadow reactions, and how those may be influencing the interaction.

We propose that the state of Open Awareness facilitates all aspects of Holding The Space: resonance and rapport through a subtle and responsive awareness; a participatory vision through the sense of interconnectedness; a mindful presence; a sense of goodwill and compassion brought on by a unifying state of awareness; and a natural widening of one's perception of reality.

The *how to* of Open Awareness

As lofty as the desired state of Open Awareness appears, the state is easily attained through a basic methodology that can be taught and practiced. The methodology is simple enough to learn relatively quickly, and profound enough to allow an evolution of consciousness with deepened practice.

There are various means to facilitate Open Awareness (see Tables 1 and 2 for examples). In general, the means begin by identifying one's present experience of self, by first focusing attention through the senses, then noticing mental objects such as thoughts and emotions, and then broadening awareness to the context and the container that allows for one's current experience. As Open Awareness expands, there is a widening mindful experience of the energetic field between objects and individuals. As Open Awareness deepens, one's experience of the space-in-between refines, the subject-object divide dissolves, and the

more subtle realms come into awareness. There is a progression from an awareness of the concrete, fixed and separate, to an awareness of the subtle, dynamic and interconnected.

In practice, the process of opening one's awareness typically begins with attention to the content of one's current sensory experience (e.g. visual, auditory, somatic), and then progresses to a more subtle background experience of the senses, a meta observation of mental objects (e.g. patterns of thoughts and emotions) with an intent to allow extension to a more energetic awareness of the space in-between everything. The expansion is both inward (to the deep personal) and outward (to the interpersonal and transpersonal). In the context of coaching and therapy, clients are guided to embody the experience and root it in positive next step actions, behaviours and responses. Open Awareness can be both an open eye, conversational technique as well as a closed eye meditative practice. While this extending of awareness is imagined and therefore subjective, the object here is not to pretend that one is having any particular kind of experience, but rather to prime one's consciousness in order to bring forth more of what is already present in the background of awareness.

Open Awareness creates a highly present state that has numerous applications. It can have a profoundly healing or transformative effect on the individual who practices it regularly. It can serve as a constructive technique in coaching or therapeutic interventions, in addition to its previously described application in the context of Holding The Space for the client's emerging process (Dangeli, 2015). It can also be utilized as a tool for meditative insight and growth.

Open Awareness in relation to other methodologies

The earliest tracings of Open Awareness appear to stem from Buddhist origins (Gunaratana, 1996) and it was possibly first introduced in the West through the teachings of George Ivanovich Gurdjieff in the early nineteen hundreds (Ouspensky, 1971). Aspects of Open Awareness have been integrated into some of the techniques of Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP) (Bandler & Grinder, 1976; Overdurf & Silverthorn, 1995) and other psychological interventions, although it has received only nominal attention from the mainstream scientific community (Farb, et al. 2007; Hanson, 2011). There are similarities to, and differences between similar approaches such as Open Focus (Fehmi & Robbins, 2008), Open Monitoring, Focused Attention meditation (Lippelt, Hommel & Colzato, 2014; Kabat-Zinn, 2003), and Focus-defocus (Pillay, 2017).

Open Focus is the name of the attention training programme created by neuroscientist, Dr Lester Fehmi (Fehmi & Robbins, 2008). Fehmi showed through neurofeedback EEG readings that certain styles of attention promoted synchronous whole brain activity that may be associated with mental and physical wellbeing. His four attention styles theory identifies four combinations of two styles of attention: diffuse versus narrow (attention takes in the bigger picture versus focused on a single object) and objective versus immersed (dissociated observation versus more direct experience). His model supports Open Awareness in at least two important aspects. Firstly, he recognizes that it is the flexibility and movement between attention styles that is important. This controlled plasticity is also a feature of the Open Awareness state. Secondly, his proposed techniques for reaching the optimal attention style, similar to Open Awareness, utilize an experience of the perceived space between and within objects and the physical body (Fehmi & Robbins, 2008).

Although Open Awareness is not a meditation technique per se, it shares properties of awareness and attention with various forms of mindfulness meditation. These include Open Monitoring (Lippelt et al, 2014), and the complementary perception of the focused attention and peripheral awareness streams of awareness (Yates, 2015). The inherent mindfulness component of Open Awareness cultivates the ability to adapt and regulate one's thoughts,

feelings and actions according to the situation. Rather than perceiving mental and emotional states as fixed, the mindful approach identifies their impermanent nature and treats them as transitory phenomena (Kabat-Zinn, 1990; Williams & Teasdale, 2002). To note here is that Open Awareness is a functional and pragmatic approach designed for application in real life scenarios and within coaching and therapeutic sessions. In an important way, the Open Awareness approach incorporates salient elements of mindfulness, and applies them within both coaching and therapy frameworks. Mindfulness meditation however, often has a different goal, namely the attainment of enlightenment through insight and non-dual awareness (Yates, 2015).

Open Monitoring is a mindfulness approach wherein the focus of awareness becomes the monitoring of awareness itself. In contrast to focused attention meditation, no single object or experience is focused on, instead there is a non-judgmental, unattached moment-to-moment awareness of all mental objects and sensory experiences that are within the field of awareness (Vago & Silbersweig, 2012). Open Awareness harnesses a form of open monitoring, but also includes the potential to respond to objects in the awareness in an intuitive and appropriate way.

An over-fixation into the attentive focused processing mode of awareness to the exclusion of a wider, less processed and unfocused mode has been identified as a barrier to growth and creativity: a focus-defocus imbalance (Pillay, 2017). Yates (2015) delineates the complementary different roles of attention and peripheral awareness (Table 3).

We propose that the nature of Open Awareness - with its incorporation of widening background awareness while maintaining conscious focus- is ideal for facilitating the dynamic complementary relationship between attention and peripheral awareness. This facilitates the skill of the coach or therapist to be in an open, mindful space and simultaneously apply therapeutic strategies with both cognitive and intuitive elements.

Conclusion

Holding the liminal space is a core competency in transpersonal coaching. Facilitating the optimal setting for this work requires intuitive resonance and rapport, a participatory perspective, mindfulness, an accepting and compassionate attitude, and a shift in both practitioner and client from a narrow to an expanded state. The entering of the state of awareness with all these elements is a skill that can be learnt and practiced. One methodology for doing so is the Open Awareness technique. Open Awareness is a refined state of awareness with a mindful mode of perception, including both introspective and extrospective awareness, a sense of interconnectedness and compassion, and a dynamic balance between conscious attention and peripheral awareness.

We share our vision of making the simple and applied skills of Open Awareness available to transpersonal practitioners, coaches and therapists as a core skill as well as an adjunct to their existing methodology. We propose that Open Awareness is simple enough to be easily taught, and extensive enough to allow advanced applications within transpersonal coaching and therapeutic methodologies. Next steps include making the methodology more widely available, and exploring variations and further applications. There is also a need for research to investigate the effects and refine our understanding of the components. In order to do so, we have identified the need for a taxonomy model for states of awareness in a coaching or therapy setting, and a model to understand the outcomes that flow from the process, and innovative research methodology to investigate the link between the two.

Table 1.

An abbreviated example of a general Open Awareness technique.
<p>Keep your head facing forward and eyes open throughout the following 6 steps:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Extend your visual field of awareness as far as possible to the left and right simultaneously.2. Expand your field of awareness all around you and sense the entire volume of space that your whole body occupies.3. Notice the pauses or space between your breaths (continue for at least 30 seconds).4. Bring awareness into the space between you, all people and everything in the area.5. Notice how your breath connects you to the unlimited and unifying space that we all share.6. Observe your moment to moment experience from the perspective of space itself. <p>End by focussing on your breath for at least 30 seconds.</p>

Table 2.

An example of an Open Awareness method to Hold The Space in coaching and therapy.
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Start by focusing on the space between you and the other(s).2. Access peripheral vision -- extend your visual field of awareness as far as possible to the left and right simultaneously.3. Expand your field of awareness all around you and the other(s).4. Sense the entire volume of space that your whole awareness occupies.5. Notice how everything that you experience, including the other(s), is within the extended space of your awareness.6. Have the intention to embrace and gently hold the other(s) within the space of your expanded awareness.7. Bring into the space your intention to be of unconditional support and service to the other(s) who are being held in your open awareness.
End by focussing on your breath for at least 30 seconds.

Table 3. The dynamic interaction between Attention and Peripheral Awareness (adapted from: Yates, 2015).

Attention	Peripheral Awareness
Isolates and analyses experience	Observant from a holistic and contextual perspective
More processing, slower response	Less processing, quicker response
Selects information from awareness	Filters incoming information
Narrow, fixated, singular	Open, receptive, interconnected
Personal 'self' centred	Self-other-relationship-context centred (objectivity)

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The Holistic Value of Open Awareness in Coaching

Open awareness (OA) is a particular mode of perception in which individuals are attentive to both their own thoughts and feelings as well as those of others, including the context that connects them. It is a type of attention that is close to being simultaneously inward and outward focused, thereby making one more conscious of the interrelatedness of phenomena.

In the context of coaching, OA enables clients to feel felt, as well as connected to others and part of life as a whole. Coaches in open awareness perceive their clients beyond (but not excluding) the client's expressed self-concept, while simultaneously maintaining an expanded perception of themselves and the coaching relationship. My observations of coaches who take this approach is that not only do they enhance their coaching effectiveness, they develop deep rapport with their clients and naturally 'hold the space' that promotes transformation, which in turn develops a coaching relationship that nurtures growth in both the client as well as the coach. Commenting on transpersonal approaches to therapy, Friedman (2013) states:

“Both therapist [coach] and patient [client] may be in a modified state of consciousness and exchange information and energy at levels that can include lower unconsciousness, normal consciousness, and higher consciousness. This is one reason why we think transpersonal psychotherapists must undergo a demanding training, allowing them to monitor themselves and become available at several levels simultaneously, increasing their capacity to resonate with their clients” (p. 582).

Approaches that don't incorporate the expanding of perceptions on the part of the client may still serve to improve certain conditions, but might not necessarily lead to an evolution in consciousness or personal and transpersonal growth. Transpersonal coaching interventions lead to more integration of the aspects of consciousness that have become obscured or disconnected by overwhelming or persistent stressors. Open awareness

is a useful resource when it comes to identifying and integrating the unconscious aspects of ourselves that inhibit us from being fully functional (aligned in mind-body-spirit). A fully functional human being is not only one who has learnt to cope with the challenges of life, but one who thrives regardless of them. Fully functional human beings are not a perfected breed of humans, they are normal and natural people who live from the awareness that everyone and everything is interconnected and we all exist for a reason. Therefore, coaching approaches that promote this type of awareness are encouraged.

One might argue that the value of transpersonal perspectives and practices like OA might be exaggerated and that the qualities of empathy and compassion will suffice in coaching contexts. While the value of empathy and compassion should not be undermined, they are not always easy traits to cultivate in the presence of 'difficult people' and with certain clients. Those with experience in using the OA skills in coaching contexts have reported that it promotes empathy and compassion toward oneself and others, regardless of their behaviour.

OA is recommended as a useful skill in coaching to help clients broaden their level of perception for the purpose of becoming more fully integrated, whole and functional.

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Chapter 4

Open Awareness in Practice

The ideas and exercises in this chapter are intended for those who are already familiar with OA, as well as for coaches, therapists, councillors, social workers and health-care practitioners.

Open Awareness Applied in Coaching and Therapy

OA is more than a technique, it is a natural mode of being, one that we, as humans, find ourselves in when we are completely free of burdens on every level – physical, mental, emotional and spiritual (Finlay, 2013).

The first chapter of this book refers to research showing how the practice of OA helps people to deal more resourcefully with stress, prevent burnout, enhance resilience, improve mental performance and establish a positive flow in our endeavours. As insights from the expanded and interconnected mind (OA) become embodied, inspired ideas, solutions to problems, and new perspectives are revealed.

When an issue can be seen from a new perspective, we can think about it differently and then respond to it differently. OA positively changes the way we see and interpret things. Furthermore, OA offers us a heightened state of receptivity, and, with the inner-critic silenced, we become more intuitive. Trusting our intuition can deliver positive results in all areas of our lives.

In situations where our attention is fixated on a problem (tunnel awareness), we are usually unaware of what else is possible or achievable. Solutions are out of our awareness. By learning how to establish OA, and how to integrate it into our daily lives, we gain access to a more expanded sense of ourselves, and, from that broader perspective, a challenge can be approached more holistically and resourcefully. When we understand more clearly why we think, feel and behave the way we do, our mental performance becomes enhanced, we become less reactive and more self-actualised.

By establishing OA, we enter a calm and centred state, overthinking and self-talk quietens, intuition and sensory awareness are heightened. When interacting with others, OA enables us to sense subtle energies and we become receptive to the subtleties in unconscious

communication (verbal and nonverbal), thus we can develop an enhanced ability to detect state changes in others as we feel the changes in ourselves.

As a coach or therapist, we should pay attention, and respond appropriately, to everything that the client communicates, even when they don't have the words to describe their experience, or when resistances or blockages arise. Through in OA, we are able to naturally develop deep rapport with clients, which supports their process, helping them to advance in their thinking, and to overcome resistances or obstacles. This bears with it the advantage that often clients achieve fulfilling results without the use of robust psychological interventions or other change techniques.

Teaching clients how to establish OA, and how to integrate it into their daily lives, can be profoundly healing or transformative for individuals, as well as groups. The OA state can be *anchored* in order for it to be available anywhere and anytime. One simple way of doing so, for example, is by guiding the client into OA, and while they are in the OA state, have them take a long and slow breath -- into their nose and out from their mouth, repeating the breath a few times while the client is in OA. Then describe to the client how they can use their 'special' breathing skill in situations where they would like to access OA. If it has been successfully anchored, the client's 'special' breathing skill will trigger the state of OA when they apply it. Other basic OA skills are shared in Chapter 2 of this book.

With OA there is no final point, instead there is an increasing conscious awareness of what was previously unconscious. Enlightening and empowering states of consciousness can be accessed and then used in meaningful and productive ways. OA states motivate us to take resourceful actions that serve our best interests, while maintaining compassion for the welfare of others and the environment. The establishment and maintenance of *mindful resilience* is a natural aspect of OA.

Over the past several years, my clients and course participants have reported that open awareness not only enables them to deal with stressful situations more resourcefully, but they are able to establish a calm and mindful state with relative ease, sleep better,

concentrate for longer and overcome mental blocks. Additionally, through becoming less identified with a limiting self-concept, they are less controlled by negative thoughts and reactions. With this comes inner peace and meaning in life.

In summary, OA is the process of establishing broader perspectives and then enabling our actions to be inspired by an expanded sense of self that sees the 'bigger picture'.

Reference:

Finlay, L. (2013). Engaging Phenomenological Analysis. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*. p.23. Taylor & Francis. Open University, United Kingdom.

[*OA weekend events*](#) and [*online training*](#) are available. OA is a fundamental approach taught in the [*Authentic Self Empowerment Facilitator Training*](#) and it is a central aspect of the [*Transpersonal Coach Model*](#).

Solving Problems with Open Awareness

Question from one of my coaching students:

“Do you think in the right context tunnel awareness can be helpful, motivating and empowering”?

“My clients come to me with both a problem around their mindset, and an immediate problem with the way they look and feel. Many people need to see some quick progress in order to maintain their confidence in the process. Would it not be useful to use some tunnel awareness to plough forward and resolve some of the immediate issues - and then build on this success with positivity and open awareness. Is tunnel awareness not helpful to get things done quickly and efficiently with no distractions”?

My response:

There's nothing inherently 'wrong' with tunnel awareness, and as you have identified, it can be useful when one's objective is to plough forward and get the job done. Tunnel awareness is just what we need when a sabre-toothed tiger shows up. However, this type of fixated attention can be a hindrance or a limitation when we're unnecessarily stressed, as it blocks access to our emotional and social intelligence, inhibiting empathy and compassion, as well as stunting creativity and intuition.

In open awareness we can still be focused, concentrating on the task at hand, while enjoying the freedom of a far greater range of choices in terms of how we think, feel and respond.

Fight & flight mode, driven by tunnel awareness, will be there when we need it, as it is a primal reaction in emergency situations. It's gotten us to where we are today. Nevertheless, if we want to evolve beyond survival instincts, and be a more conscious presence in life today, then developing a more mindful way of being may benefit us and the world. It is for this reason that the practice of open awareness has been created.

The States of Awareness Model

Developed by Dr. Hennie Geldenhuys

“What you need is to be aware of being aware. Be aware deliberately and consciously, broaden and deepen the field of awareness. You are always conscious of the mind, but you are not always aware of yourself as being conscious.”

Sri Maharaj Nisargadatta

Introduction

Can we know what awareness is and what consciousness is and how they differ? The contemplative traditions have been grappling with these concepts for ages (one example is Nisargadatta - see references at end). A functional definition for transpersonal coaches is that consciousness is the conceptual perception that “I am, I exist ” - and therefore other things and people also exist and things are separate from each other and I relate to those others in some way or another. It is our conceptual “beingness” and how that relates to the world.

Awareness is the capacity or the faculty for or the process of perception. It is that which perceives and experiences. Awareness leads to being conscious, but is not conscious itself, exists beyond the ego consciousness, and is a more intuitive, direct and less processed faculty.

Why is this important? For coaches and change workers, it is useful to realise that how we are aware (the process and nature of perception) determines how consciousness fluctuates (how we relate to ourselves, to others and to everything else). Awareness forms the content and nature of consciousness. We need to be aware of something for it to be in our consciousness. So by changing awareness we change consciousness. By changing how we are conscious, we grow out of limiting perceptions of problems or limiting beliefs.

AWARENESS → CONSCIOUSNESS → HOW I RELATE TO MYSELF AND THE WORLD

The aggregate (sum total) of how our awareness “is” at any point in time (of course, it isn’t really because it’s not a thing...), is called a “State of Awareness”. States of Awareness are not static, but dynamic from moment to moment. Although most of us are not ordinarily aware of how our awareness is shifting, it turns out that with practice and technique we can teach our awareness to become more aware of itself, and even modify itself, thereby changing our consciousness and the very nature of who we are and what we do. That “meta awareness” is how the magic happens. Simply by cultivating meta awareness, awareness widens and “self corrects”, leading to potentially profound insights and integrating inner resources.

Rather than the content of experience or perception influencing awareness, it is more likely that awareness influences the content. Changing the mode of perception of an issue (the how), for example, is more efficient and way more likely to succeed than grappling with the content of that issue (the what). States of Awareness lead to certain patterns of perception, thoughts and emotions, certain reinforced memories and biases, and resulting projections and behaviours. Understanding and utilizing states of awareness, therefore, has direct application to coaching and therapy, and to personal development.

Some states of awareness are more conducive to growth and healing than others. For example, the state of Open Awareness (OA) is described as a calm and receptive state of mindfulness accompanied by expanded modes of perception and experience that can lead to personal interpersonal and transpersonal responsiveness (Dangeli, 2017).

What if we could describe and apply a working understanding of the concepts and terminology around awareness (a functional taxonomy) and how they interrelate in the context of coaching? The States of Awareness Model presented here is an early attempt to do so.

Our state of awareness in any particular moment has certain characteristics. Although each moment of awareness is unique, complex, and nuanced, we may be able to tag some generalized characteristics or variables to describe how the state is in that moment, or during a series of moments.

Curiosity about states of awareness is not new. How we approach constructing a taxonomical frame of reference is dictated in large part by the tradition from which we come. For example, neuroscience bases its understanding on how the complex neurological and biochemical interactions within the brain-body system give rise to fluctuations that we experience subjectively (Siegel, 2012). The meditative and contemplative traditions aim to develop awareness as a tool for mindfulness, insight and awakening (Yates, 2015).

Coaching disciplines, such as Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP), hypnosis, transpersonal coaching and refined variants such as Authentic Self Empowerment (ASE), harness states of awareness as therapeutic and developmental interventions (Dangeli, 2017). It is this last application that is primarily addressed by the States of Awareness Model. The model is simple, and is not meant to be academic, existential or philosophical. It is designed for functionality in the context of a coaching or therapeutic context, particularly a transpersonal intervention.

Potential applications

The model may have at least three general applications. Firstly, coaches and therapists commonly observe that clients are clients because their difficulty or issue is rooted in a certain fixed and rigid mode of awareness. The solution is often to loosen awareness from that fixed state to a more flexible state. Healing then occurs spontaneously. An understanding of a fixed state of awareness can be facilitated in the therapist and client by applying the model to “map” the current state of awareness. A therapeutic change in awareness through the appropriate intervention can also be tracked applying the same model. So the model is both an indicator and a metric.

Secondly, the model can guide and inform the actual intervention. If the coach realizes that the client “does the issue” when stuck in a certain state (e.g. attention repeatedly fixated on a singled-out external event that takes a conceptual form such as a thought, self talk or a mental picture) he has a clue as to the mechanism of facilitating a shift in that state (e.g. widen the scope of awareness to include awareness of internal, grounded and interrelated sensory experiences).

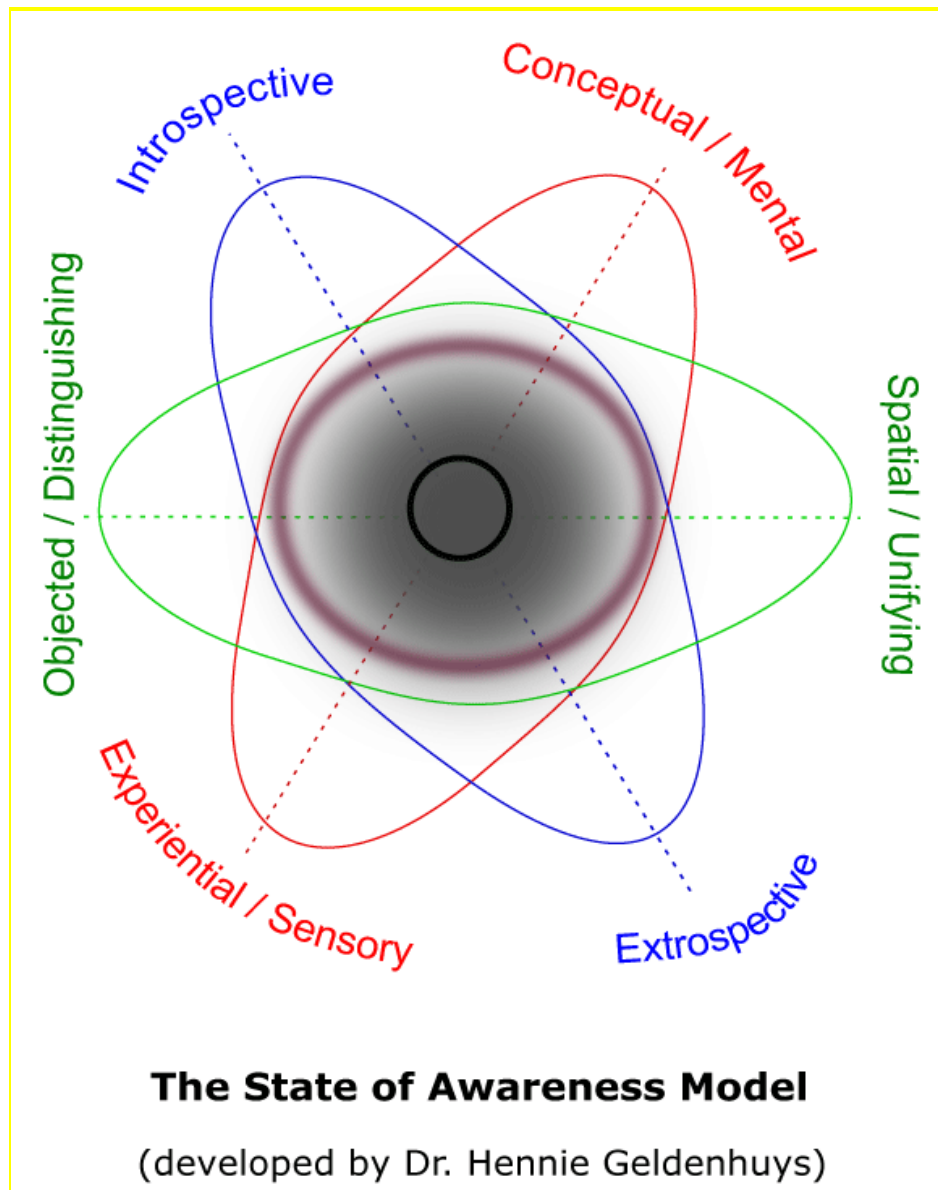
A third use of this model is for training and research purposes in transpersonal coaching or therapy. Its review and analysis, including its limitations and strengths, facilitates discussion and insight into shifting states of awareness - a core skill for the transpersonal coach and trainees.

Caveats and limitations

The model should not be applied mechanically or in a linear fashion. Transpersonal interventions are by nature partly intellectual but in large part intuitive. The model is not a paint by numbers blueprint, but a tool to be assimilated into the coaching pattern.

Awareness is infinitely complex and dynamic, much more than any model can describe. There are any number of finer aspects not included in this model. This is done purposefully to keep it as simple and functional as possible in the context of coaching and therapy. There is danger in generalization, and all models are generalizations.

There is potential for confusion of terminology, which may be partly epistemological (a diversity of knowledge bases and traditions), and partly semantic (caught up in the language). The description of the model below attempts to clarify the intent behind the terminology, acknowledging that the actual words are themselves just symbols, a map, and not the territory. The model is based on a synthesis of an intellectual understanding of awareness from various disciplines, from feedback and hermeneutic (interpretive) experience of coaches and their clients, and from personal exploration by the authors in a mindful experiential setting.



Description of the States of Awareness Model

The model is visual, has two main parts (Modes of Perception, and the Awareness Complex) and two directions of movement (on the three-dimensional plane of modes of perception, and expanding/contracting). The modes are represented by three planes that form a *three-dimensional matrix*. The attention complex is a defined *circle within the hazy wave of peripheral awareness*.

The **3 modes of perception** represent the direction and quality of awareness and have opposite poles:

- *Introspective* (awareness turned inward from the outside) and *Extrospective* (awareness turned outward from the inside)
- *Experiential / Sensory* (directed toward direct experience of the senses) and *Conceptual / Mental* (directed toward abstract mental objects such as thoughts, self-talk, mental pictures, emotions, labels and summations)
- *Spatial / Unifying* (integrated, merged, indivisible, diffuse) and *Objected / Distinguishing* (distinguishing one thing from another, relationship between objects, autonomy of objects)

Certain secondary modes may arise from these 3 primary modes - such as time orientation (present vs past/future) and association/dissociation.

The **Attention Complex** represents the relationship between focused and defocused type awareness, and has 2 subparts:

- *Attention*: analytical, focussed awareness, conscious, cognitive
- *Peripheral Awareness*: unfocused, background awareness, mostly preconscious, intuitive

The dynamic relationship between Attention and Peripheral Awareness

There is an important relationship between Attention *within* Peripheral Awareness. Attention is like the “active arm” of awareness. It synthesises and integrates different elements from our perception i.e. plays the director, executive or mediator role. All information available to Attention comes out of the Peripheral Awareness field. The Peripheral Awareness also stabilizes and protects Attention. Yates (2015) describes this as a set of sub-minds that process different senses and that are integrated in the space of attention awareness. Attention is therefore heavily modulated by Peripheral Awareness.

Attention itself is probably a mostly fixed faculty (it can't be changed), but Peripheral Awareness is amenable to modification and development.

There are **two types of related movement** in the model:

- The Attention Complex is always located somewhere in the three-dimensional matrix of planes, at some point along each of the three planes, and can move along the planes in either direction on each of the three planes (from introspective to extrospective, experiential to conceptual, spatial to distinguishing)
- The Peripheral Awareness field can move concentrically (expanding outward, or contracting inward). The Attention circle can also contract or expand, but in a more limited fashion. Because the movement is concentric, Peripheral Awareness expands or contracts in all directions along the three planes simultaneously.

The shape of the three planes (elliptical with less space toward the ends and more space in the centre) means that:

- When the Attention Complex is toward a more extreme end of a plane (mode of awareness is more biased and skewed toward one end), there is less space for expansion and Peripheral Awareness is contracted (less flexibility, "boxed in").

When Peripheral Awareness expands, the Attention Complex is moved toward the centre where there is more space (more flexibility and freedom), and away from the extremes of the planes.

Putting it all together: the working of the model

In a coaching and therapeutic context, awareness is optimal when it has the following properties:

- It is *flexible* as opposed to rigid (attention is not fixated in one mode or extreme)
- There is *choice and holistic control* (attention can move fluidly according to intent)
- *Maximum and varied information* from the internal, external and transpersonal environment is available to attention to perform its choice-making/executive function

Consider that awareness determines how we process and integrate information and influences our reactions and behaviours.

In terms of the model this means that in an optimal state of awareness:

- The *field of Peripheral Awareness is wide* so that Attention has plenty of room in which to move
- *Attention is not stuck* in one end or mode, but can move freely between different modes of awareness through intent and choice, because the field of Peripheral Awareness in which it moves is expansive. *Attention is dynamic and has access* to elements of all modes of perception simultaneously (sensory and conceptual, discriminatory and unitive, internal and external).
- Peripheral Awareness, from which all information is filtered into awareness, is *spread wide*, meaning that the amount and type of input information potentially available to attention and awareness is extended
- *Attention is stable*, meaning that it is not overly loose (“monkey mind”) or overly fixated (“tunnel awareness”)

- There is a “unification of perceptual poles”, holding seemingly contradictory types of perception (e.g. outer vs inner, mental vs sensory, separate vs merged) in awareness simultaneously

These are the characteristics of the optimal state of awareness we know as **“Open Awareness”**. On the model, Open Awareness would be depicted as the Attention Complex positioned in the wide centre within the three-dimensional matrix, a wide field of Peripheral Awareness that is expanded over the entire centre portion in all directions, and freedom of movement of the Attention ring within Peripheral Awareness.

Think of a common issue that clients may have and how the underlying state of awareness differs from Open Awareness. How can we express that issue in terms of this model?

When the field of Peripheral Awareness expands beyond a certain point, it develops the capacity to “turn back onto itself”, *so in effect awareness becomes aware of awareness (“Metacognitive Internal Awareness”)*.

In terms of coaching process, this model has some implications:

- When we optimize awareness, our way of being and functioning spontaneously become more resourceful
- Cultivating expanded Peripheral Awareness is key
- In cultivating Peripheral Awareness, attention becomes spontaneously more flexible, better at finding creative solutions and has more information at its disposal
- The balanced quality of the state of awareness is fundamental and the process of expanded awareness is more important than the content of awareness
- Meta-awareness of the process of awareness facilitates personal, interpersonal and transpersonal growth through insight into the habitual psychological patterns and mechanisms that create the problems for which we seek solutions

Having presented the main elements of the model, and considering what could flow from an optimal state such as Open Awareness (Dangeli,2017), the next question is how to facilitate such a state in the coach and client. These are the approaches and techniques that are taught in the [Open Awareness and ASE courses](#).

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The States of Awareness Model is developed by Dr. Hennie Geldenhuys - a medical doctor; clinical researcher and academic; certified Transpersonal, Authentic Self Empowerment and Open Awareness coach; and master hypnotherapist.

Hennie is also a certified trainer in Open Awareness and Authentic Self Empowerment (ASE). He lives in the Western Cape, South Africa, nestled amongst the mountains with his family, cats and dogs.

Visit Hennie's website: www.innerheal.co.za

The Game of Rings: An Open Awareness Analogy

Created by Dr. Hennie Geldenhuys

Would you like to play a game?

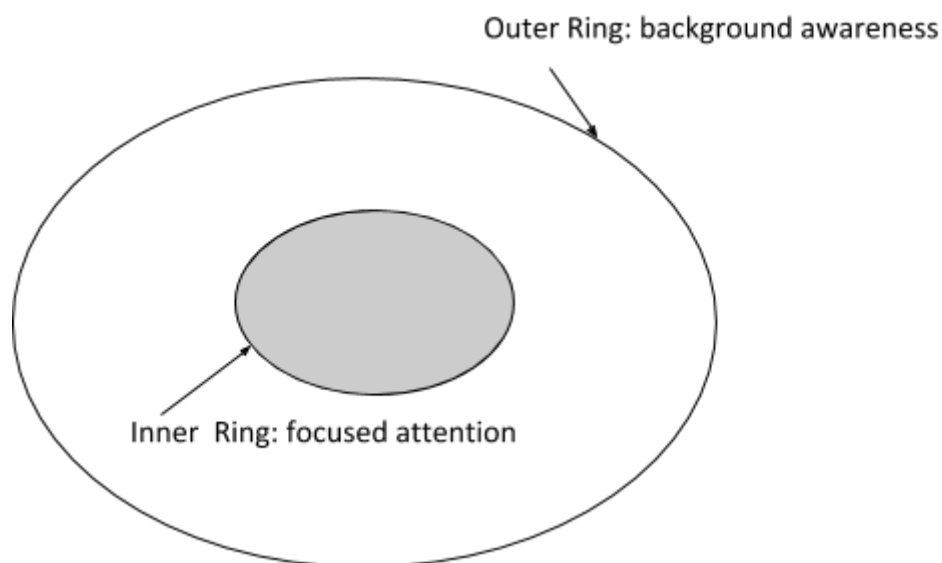
The game doesn't really have an objective. If there is a point, it's to have the experience of playing it. Some might even say the game plays you.

Like any game, the more you practise and the more insightful your approach, the more proficient you become. As a bonus, the skills you learn in this game are useful for any area of your life.

Imagine your awareness as two concentric rings, one within the other.

The outer ring is the part of your awareness that is spread over a wider area. Let's call it **diffuse background awareness**.

The inner smaller ring is more concentrated, focussed, more pinpoint. Let's call it **narrow focused attention**.



To play this game you need to understand the playing field.

Everything you can ever be aware of is spread out over the field of awareness. Within this field are all the objects, people, thoughts, sensations, entities, beings, memories, emotions - everything and anything you could possibly imagine. And of course, in between all this stuff is open space. This field is the **content of awareness**.

Note from the game master: There are no rules, but it helps to understand the tools of the game, which are the two rings.

The two types of awareness, the two rings, have different ways of being aware. It's like having two types of instruments or equipment with which to play the game.

The diffuse background awareness, because it needs to deal with a whole lot of material over a wide area at once, is adapted to **gather and merge content**. It doesn't deal as much in detail or analysis. It's more passive, and requires less energy.

Focussed attention, the inner ring, can **concentrate on a smaller area**, on one thing at a time. It's better at analysis, and tends to separate smaller pieces of information from the background in order to examine them. It has a more active, searching character, and uses more energy.

Enough theory - how do we play?

The game starts with an **intent**, a conscious decision to play.

The main skill is to keep observing, to keep watching whatever plays out, with curiosity and without judgment. This is **mindfulness**.

Sounds simple, doesn't it?

We let the two rings do what they do naturally. And we use our **imagination** to **observe** them at play. Technically, we **observe the way we observe** or we become **aware of the awareness**.

Note from the game master: Don't get discouraged.

It often happens that while we play we're distracted. That's fine. When that happens, smile (it's just a game!) and just remember to start again, resuming where you left off or anywhere else in the middle. The trick is to notice when you drift. The point is not to do this perfectly, but just to do it.

Imagine the soft outer ring of unfocused background awareness **expanding**. It stretches and grows both outward and inward.

Can you imagine the outer ring extend outward into the area around you?

Be imaginative, be creative, **visualize** this in whatever way or ways that work for you.

As the ring moves it gobbles up everything out there into it. Everything it swallows becomes part of its inside. You observe what's in the ring by what arrives through your **senses**: what you hear, see and sense within it.

You can be aware of being aware of more and more as the ring expands. Can you let it expand to the **space** immediately around you? Further? Filling up the room ? Don't stop there, this is a game, go further, we aren't limited by time and space or "reality".

*Note from the game master: You'll notice that this type of knowing, this background awareness, has its own special way of knowing. The more content filters into the ring, the less you can focus on each individual element, until you have no choice but to just **let go and experience the content more directly**, without thinking about it. Just notice what you notice.*

And while you're at it, imagine the outer ring **expanding inward as well as outward**, into the space inside you. So now you can note how you are observing all the inner body senses too, like touch, discomfort, warmth, balance, the sensation of the breathing or whatever else makes itself known. Even your thoughts and your emotions and mental pictures.

Note from the game master: This is where that game gets freaky. Anything and everything goes (and comes). Who really knows all the mystical stuff that may be in here or out there?

Still having fun?

Now it's time for the inner ring of attention.

Here's the magic: you can keep experiencing that outer ring and, **at the same time**, the inner ring of focused attention. Notice how you can keep being aware of what's within the space of the outer ring, and at the same time **focus on something within that space**.

Choose one thing. For example, the sensation of the breath amongst all the other sensations out there, or bring out a single sound amongst all the other sounds. You can **choose** any object of your focus. You get to choose what the inner ring focuses on within that larger outer ring. And then, if you want, choose the next thing or stay on that one thing. The "thing" can be anything, from an object, to a sensation, to a thought, an emotion, anything that you can imagine.

Note from the game master: Observe the focused nature of this inner ring of attention. How is it different from the outer ring? You can zone in that inner ring all the way in and out again, can't you? And move it around too. How does the outer ring complement the inner ring and vica versa?

Important: the inner ring only gets to play with what's already in the outer ring.

When the outer ring is wide (perspective and overview), and the inner ring is free to move around freely within the outer ring (not fixated or restricted and not in “tunnel vision”) - this is **Open Awareness**.

Final word from the game master: Experiment, have fun. Play with the rings. There's no right way or wrong way. The more you play the better you get at this. Investigate how you can allow the rings to expand and contract, together, on their own, in one way, or another. Anything goes!

Go play.

The Game of Rings is created by Dr. Hennie Geldenhuys - a medical doctor; clinical researcher and academic; certified Transpersonal, Authentic Self Empowerment and Open Awareness coach; and master hypnotherapist.

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The Open Awareness Facilitation Pattern

Created by Dr. Hennie Geldenhuys

If one could break down into smaller steps the process of facilitating Open Awareness, it could follow this pattern:

1. Set the INTENT
2. Mindfully observe the CONTENT of awareness
3. UTILIZE the content
4. VALIDATE and deepen the quality of the experience

In a way, these steps are scaffolding to the special state of awareness we know as Open Awareness (OA). Open Awareness has both mystical and pragmatic characteristics. This article is a pragmatic one, some might even say technical, considering some characteristics of OA facilitation.

The techniques of Open Awareness can be learnt and taught. The methodology is not the experience. The map is not the territory. And of course, each experience of OA is unique. But a grasp of some “how to’s” or a set of tools can be useful, particularly early on as scaffolding to the technique of facilitation. The pattern suggested in this article is not the only approach and can be used as a tool or technique for facilitation, or as a framework to consider what's happening during the facilitation of the OA state.

Observe these tools in your own OA practice, or when facilitating OA with others. Perhaps it's different for you, maybe you would like to add or refine. It's up to you.

This approach is a methodological one. It sets the intent to utilize the content of awareness in a certain way and within the container of mindfulness, looking for certain qualities along the way.

Set the Intent

The shift in awareness is not random or an accident. We set out to allow it to manifest and stabilize. *We make a conscious decision toward awareness.*

Setting the intent can be as simple as an internal decision to let go or open up.

Or it could be a moment to recognize and intend to release the things in your internal and external environment that are capturing your attention in the present moment. These things could be internal (e.g. thinking, emotions) or external (e.g. loud noises, objects or movement in the physical environment): "what are the thoughts turning in my mind right now?"; "what is monopolizing in my awareness?", "what are the distractions in my environment right now?".

Intent triggers the OA process and could in turn be linked or stacked through pre-conditioning to other triggers e.g. the breath, a hand action, the position of the tongue etc.

Mindfully observe the content

At this stage we observe and acknowledge the content *mindfully* - with minimum judgement, minimum attachment and minimal effort. This is a more passive phase of the process. We allow the content to find us without reaching out to it, and to diffuse naturally into the space of mindfulness we have intended to open. In the theory of mindfulness, this is often referred to as *Open Monitoring*.

The content, or "things" contained within awareness, include:

- *Senses* (sight, sound, touch, taste, smell etc.) and *perception* (how we experience the senses)

- *Body sense* (sensations within the body, sense of position, pain, comfort, temperature etc.) and *Body presence* (how we experience having a body)
- *Objects* (things, people, material stuff, individual parts of a whole) and the *Space* in between them (the nothingness or vacuum or openness)
- *Mental content* (thoughts, inner words, emotions, labels) and *Concepts* (our processing or understanding of things)
- *Transpersonal* (the “everything else” outside of the self), and the *Non-conscious* (that of which we have a sense of being without directly knowing it)

Starting with the senses is often the easiest strategy to start off with, gradually allowing more of the subtle content to become more conscious.

The first two steps (intent and mindful observation) are the container for the OA process. Whenever the attention is captured or wanders, we go back to the basics of these two steps. As with many other contemplative or meditative processes, wandering off is not uncommon, it's the knowing to come back that is the skill.

Utilize the content

Open Awareness now deepens the mindfulness experience by applying approaches from coaching and Eriksonian hypnosis to the content, such as:

- *Visualization* (mental imagery) and *Imagination* (what the imagery gets up to) e.g. imagine your awareness expands way beyond your body to include the entire space around you and everything in that space
- *Suggestion* (direct or indirect suggestions on how to manage the content) and *Validation*_(confirmation, obvious or implicit, of whatever is happening) e.g. how

would it be if all those objects in that space out there became one within the space inside? You can be aware of the breath, can't you?

- *Dissociation* (aware of being aware without being all in the experience) and *Association* (experiencing the experience from within) e.g. notice, as if from far or above, what you are noticing; become the sensation of your skin against skin; you can be the breather of the breath and also the body being breathed down there.

These utilization techniques have a more active nature but are grounded in the container of mindfulness. This means not getting drawn in or pulled off by the content or distracted, by maintaining an awareness of the awareness and exercising a “soft discipline” throughout the process. When in doubt, return to practicing open monitoring mindfulness, just observing, before picking up the utilization steps again.

Using the tools of imagination, suggestion and dissociation we guide the awareness to adopt certain directions or discriminations:

- *Abstraction* is the moving of awareness from the concrete or obvious to the subtle e.g. from the loudest closest sounds or foremost sensations of the breath, to the softer in-between sounds or silence, or sensations of the soft movement of air in the breath
- *Expansion* is moving to increase the metaphorical scope or field of awareness, both outwards e.g. the very furthest sound you can hear, and inwards e.g. the deepest thought forming inside your mind
- *Focus* (more actively singling out a smaller or more single unit) within defocus (a passive acknowledgement of the merged contextual sense of everything else that is not that) e.g. notice the movement of air through the tip of the nose and at the same time all those other sensations throughout and around and beyond the body

- *Absorption* is a subtle skill of allowing awareness to let go of the object or content, and rest around or behind it e.g. as you have an awareness of the breath, letting go of the labels or notions, experience the experience behind or within the sensation

Whenever the attention wanders, or gets pulled into the content, come back to the container of intent and mindfulness.

Validate the quality of the experience

These phenomena are indicators that the OA process is unfolding. They are “meta experiences” that serve as validation, deepen and stabilize the state, like road signs along the way. Some of these experiences stay at the fringe of consciousness, or sometimes during the process we recognize them and acknowledge them consciously.

- *Connection* (the experience of feeling connected to other people and beings, a subtle insight into the relationship between things)
- *Equanimity* (calmness, openness, relaxed, patient, non-rushed)
- *Expanded* (a sense of being more, or wider, deeper, higher or beyond)
- *Appreciation* (thankfulness) and *Awe* (the Wonder)
- *Insight* and *Reframing* (new ways of perceiving things, people or situations)

Putting it all together: some examples

The words in these short examples are not important. These are not scripts. The approach is more important. Once you understand the approach, the variations are endless. Your language can be very simple, or more abstract, depending on your preference, on the client

(or you if you are your client), and the setting. You can use this pattern on yourself, or with others. The magic is not in the words themselves but in the process.

Facilitation example one (this example utilizes the sense of hearing)

How would it be to experience, right now, a moment or more of letting go, of calmness, of new ways of hearing or seeing or sensing old things that become new? (*intent, suggestion*)

Observe what you hear around you (*senses, observation*). Include as many of the sounds around you that you notice, all the way past the furthest sound at the very edge of your awareness (*imagination, suggestion, expansion*).

You notice, don't you, that some sounds are softer, or closer, or different than others? (*suggestion and validation, imagination, abstraction, mindfulness*). Which of the sounds grab your attention more than others? (*mindfulness, dissociation*)

Notice too, how you can search for and pick one of those sounds, any one amongst all the others (*active, focus*). Imagine bringing forward that one sound out of all the others (*suggestion, imagination*). The others are still in the background, and notice how your attention can rest on this single sound (*focus*), while still allowing all the other sounds to merge together into what is beyond that single sound over there (*abstraction, dissociation, mindfulness, expansion, defocus*).

Just experience it as it is, no more, no less (*absorption, mindfulness*).

What is inside or beyond? (*association, absorption*)

And then letting it go, let all those sounds flood in, moving unhindered, however they are, within the vast space of your awareness (*imagination, suggestion, expansion, mindfulness, passive, absorption*). They are being heard, aren't they, by some part of you and you're aware of being aware, aren't you? (*dissociation, validation*).

There's nothing here to follow, just, hear, and everything is what it is (*senses, mindfulness, passive*).

Can you hear the silence (*abstraction*)?

Imagine those sounds together (*visualization*) in the wider space around you (*outer expansion, visualization*). And, as you see that space around you, the space in which all those sounds are, and everything else too (*suggestion, expansion, dissociation*), see how that space is stretching out wider and wider and wider (*expansion, suggestion*).

What if you could observe your physical body, over there, within that very same space (*mindfulness, visualization, imagination, dissociation*). Right to within the core of yourself and all that space around and beyond (*inner and outer expansion, visualization*).

Notice your physical self in that space (*visualization*), being breathed by your breath (*senses, dissociation, mindfulness*), each in-breath drawing in that expanded self around you (*suggestion, abstraction*) and each out-breath merging you, more and more, now part of all that of everything around you (*suggestion, inner and outer expansion, abstraction*).

You are ready, aren't you?

Example two (using the experience of the breath)

Let everything go, and set the intent to allow yourself to put it all down, to breath, easily. (*suggestion, intent*)

Do you notice your breathing? (*suggestion and validation*) Notice the sensations of every breath (*senses, observation, association*). How is the experience of the breath? (*senses and perception, abstraction, mindfulness, association*). Just notice what you notice, the breath comes, and then the breath goes (*dissociation, mindfulness*). Whatever you feel is exactly what you are feeling (*validation*).

I wonder where you feel the breathing in this chest in that body (*dissociation*). What is that sensation within each in, and each out, of the breath? (*senses, abstraction, mindfulness*). You could even feel the subtle movements of your chest (*senses, suggestion*), or the soft movement of air at the tip of your nose (*focus, association*) or any of those other sensations that make themselves known to your awareness right now (*passive, suggestion, validation, mindfulness*).

Now, imagine that with each in-breath your awareness sinks deeper into your inner self (*visualization, suggestion, inner expansion, abstraction*). With each out breath the air from inside merges with the air in the space outside (*outer expansion, abstraction visualization*). You know, don't you (*suggestion*) that that same space is the space in which all things in your awareness are, all things, all people, all thoughts, all emotions? (*visualization, outer expansion*).

Nothing can be outside of the space of your awareness. The inside is the outside, and the outside inside (*suggestion, imagination*). Whatever the experience is, this is the experience. This is Open Awareness (*suggestion, validation, mindfulness*).

There's so much to explore

There are infinite variations and combinations. Apart from the content of the sensations, how would you work with the content of the mental content, interpersonal, connectedness or the transpersonal? Can you see how we can use the same pattern with a variety of content, customizing each session to the situation and overall intent and purpose?

Go play.

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Chapter 5

Open Awareness Articles

The articles included in this chapter are written by Licenced Open Awareness facilitators and professional coaches who apply OA in coaching, as well as by postgraduate students of psychology who have investigated the phenomenology and value of OA in various contexts.

Thoughts on Open Awareness

By Giedre Kleivaite

For me, the contribution of open awareness can be seen as two-fold, individual responsibility and response ability, since this form of intervention is promoting a deep self-reflection and awareness-based action. Open awareness means recognizing that the quality of our thoughts, feelings and behaviours are deeply connected to our unconscious patterns and acknowledging the extent to which this shapes our experience, which for most of us can appear as an inescapable reality. Thoughts and feelings that arise, we human beings identify as us. Open awareness involves developing an understanding of when we are being 'ruled by a trigger' of conditioned responses and limiting beliefs we have learnt from our family, teachers and society. Through the practices of open awareness, we can begin to move from the constricted form of selfhood which keeps us stuck, small, and dissatisfied to finding ways of cultivating a more empowered way of being, allowing for a much wider vision towards our unique situation and an altered meaningful participation within our society. Lack of awareness of our unconscious patterns doesn't just become an obstacle that prevents us from achieving our goals, but it also creates social barriers through unconscious biases and prejudice.

So much of our current suffering is rooted in the habit of relating to our thoughts, identities and judgements that instinctively run through our minds and make us feel separate and justified. The fundamental assumptions of our cultural moralism and surfaces-based criteria are so deeply ingrained that identification becomes automatic, leaving most people with an incredibly distorted perception of reality. The practice of open awareness challenges our usual narrow identification towards a more expanded and inclusive experience and through this deep involvement in a meditative path it reveals the non-ethical habits of the mind that are connected to individual behaviours and which reinforce the system of biases and prejudice. By examining the deeper internal causes that have led to such reactivity, we can begin to wake up from our automatic nature, start cultivating more skillful life choices and become more mindful in our daily interactions. Consistent practice of open awareness

means being active participants unceasingly challenging our own assumptions, evaluating experiences and re-examining ways of engaging.

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Giedre is a London based student, originally from Lithuania. She holds an undergraduate degree in Human Rights and Psychology and is currently undertaking a postgraduate degree in Consciousness, Spirituality and Transpersonal Psychology at Alef Trust. She is passionate about connecting individual transformation with social change and her current research project focuses on the role of unacknowledged collective trauma in ecological breakdown.

Experiencing Open Awareness

By Fiona Hovsepian

I was fortunate to have experienced transpersonal coaching from the position of 'client' as part of a three month 'learning through integrative practice' programme within the MSc course in transpersonal psychology at Alef Trust. I had no previous experience of transpersonal coaching and was able to fully immerse myself in the process without any preconceived ideas, just bringing my curiosity about how the transpersonal aspect might transpire; and, of course, bringing those issues in my life that I was keen to explore and resolve; in particular, the feeling that I was standing at a threshold. It is wonderful to now have the opportunity to reflect on my experience within the context of this module, to explore the theory and methodology and see how it resonates with my own experience of the process. The technique of Open Awareness created the held space from which the coaching session would then unfold. I experienced this as a process of firstly bringing full attention to myself and my position in the world, and then expanding into more subtle dimensions, and so beginning the session with a larger sense of reality.

Dängeli (2017) describes the technique of Open Awareness (OA) as one of promoting "the embodied actualisation of oneself (and of everyone) as interconnected holons within larger holarchies" (p. 14). By promoting a state of consciousness that recognises a larger reality and sense of interconnectedness OA enables the coaching session to begin in a liminal space that holds a real sense of the potential for transformation. In describing the characteristics of OA – mindful perception, a calm and receptive state, metacognitive introspective awareness, extrospective awareness, a sense of interconnection and compassion, balance between focused attention and peripheral sensory awareness, and a flexible, fluid and dynamic state of being – Dängeli (2018) suggests that Jorge Ferrer's participatory perspective with its focus on "our co-creative participation in a dynamic and undetermined mystery" (Ferrer, 2011, p. 2) provides a rationale for, and "finds pragmatic application" (Dängeli, 2018, p. 36) in, the liminal space created through OA. Indeed, Ferrer's (2017) focus on embodiment resonates strongly with OA; we begin from where we are in the world, fully contextualised and

embodied, and it is from that starting point that we expand our consciousness and sense of interconnectedness.

The technique of OA also finds resonance in the work of Rudolf Steiner. In a 1907 lecture, *Illusory Illness*, Steiner speaks of how a sense of disconnection from the transpersonal creates illness and anxiety. Steiner (1999) discusses the ways in which individuals might become too inward focused, “too bound up in themselves” (p. 71); he suggests that “the less human beings have the opportunity to expand into the general cosmic existence, the more they become conscious of what is going on in their own organism” (p. 71) which would lead to a disturbance in a person’s inner harmony. Echoing Dängeli’s (2017) call to shift from tunnel awareness to open awareness, Steiner (1999) suggests that “the only way we can correct what needs to be corrected is to look up from the individual, lone situation to the great mysteries of the cosmos” (p. 72).

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The Benefits of Open Awareness in Coaching

By Dr. Bonnie Bright

Open awareness has been described as a “core skill” in transpersonal coaching. By nature, it is a “flexible, fluid, and dynamic state” (Dangeli and Geldenhuys, 2018, pp. 38-39), which can give rise to a reframe of the way in which one is experiencing themselves in a given moment. It can also enable new perceptions which help us make meaning, often leading to an increased sense of interconnection and compassion.

More than *just* a “mindful” way of perceiving, open awareness relies on receptivity, and on both introspective and extrospective awareness—especially the balancing of one’s immediate conscious awareness and peripheral sensory awareness. This opens an individual to the “space between”—the energetic field between an individual and objects or people around her (including the invisible dynamic field between coach and client)—effectively softening self/other boundaries. Perceiving this dynamic field deepens our intuition, allowing the attentive coach to pick up important information from subtle clues in her client’s body language, facial expressions, etc. (Dangeli and Geldenhuys, 2018). In my experience, I also find I notice language, expressions, or wordplays that seem pregnant with meaning in the moment.

Not only does it contribute to a sense of interconnectedness, open awareness is particularly valuable for coaches in the critical role of “holding the space” for clients because it fosters a greater sense of resonance and rapport; of compassion and empathy from the coach, and a feeling of “participatory vision.” In other words, it helps clients to “feel felt” (Dangeli, 2018), and allows coaches to “become available at several levels simultaneously” (Friedman, 2013, p. 582). It also serves to “open the aperture” of awareness for both coaches and clients, allowing one to emerge from the “tunnel vision” that can be so limiting and detrimental to perception, understanding, and growth.

My own early experience of open awareness while coaching and being coached has been revelatory. Certainly, I should not have been surprised to discover that virtually all the benefits described in the literature are true, but having the actual direct experience of the

expansiveness and interconnectedness it engendered for me made me a believer. Its value is irrefutable. As a coach, I have found that even as I lead my client through a process of open awareness, it affects me profoundly as well, so that I feel completely present and capable, and the session flows smoothly as I tune in to the subtle sense of what is “needed” in each moment.

As a client, when my own coach guided me to an expanded state using open awareness, my perspective changed immediately, causing a specific limiting attitude with which I came into the session to also shift significantly—and that reframe and new awareness stayed with me throughout the session and beyond. I am grateful for the gift that open awareness offers in the process of becoming a more “fully functional human being” (Dangeli, 2018, p. 48), and appreciate the ongoing learning of how to anchor it more fully in my everyday life outside of coaching sessions as well.

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The Value of Open Awareness for “Holding the Space” in Coaching

By Jules De Vitto

There is an empathetic, compassionate and intuitive space that both client and coach can cultivate in transpersonal coaching sessions and this is described as “holding the space”. The space is an expanded state of awareness that encourages the client to accept, surrender and experience the unfolding of their experiences. Welwood (2016) suggests, in reference to working as a therapist,

It involves opening to that experience and exploring the meaning of that experience, letting it unfold, step by step, without judging it according to preconceived ideas. As a therapist, I find that allowing whatever arises to be there as it is and gently inquiring into it leads naturally in the direction of deeper truth. This is what I call psychological work in the service of spiritual development.

The qualities described by Welwood (2016) are qualities encouraged within a transpersonal coaching session, and the concept of “holding the space” refers to the held qualities and interaction between client and coach. The qualities may include intuition, connection and compassion which encompass transpersonal or altered states. The mindfulness technique of **open-awareness** can assist in the creation of this held space, as it promotes a state of being in which the inner and outer world merge to form a greater sense of interconnectedness. It enables one to perceive the interacting parts of a whole and involves moving towards a non-dual awareness in which the personal, interpersonal and transpersonal aspects of one’s being are embodied. Open-awareness can be entered into by the coach, who then guides the client into the same space using a guided process. This enables both client and coach to experience an embodied yet expanded state of consciousness, which encourages an open, empathetic and compassionate space.

My Personal Experience

I have experienced within coaching sessions and other contexts, such as when teaching, that entering open awareness creates a compassionate, empathetic and transformative space. When entering open awareness, I experience a greater sense of flow in which there is an awareness of the energetic connection in myself, the other person and the space itself. It is a sense of feeling expansive, yet grounded, which enables me to feel more connected and guided by my intuition. When coaching others, I consider this intuitive, expansive and present awareness to be extremely impactful on the client's ability to make transformative shifts. Davis (2014) supports the value of open-awareness, stating that the cultivation of an open-monitoring style of attention training helps in the embodied awareness of oneself, others and the environment. The approach assists in the development of skills such as empathy and compassion, which are essential qualities for the transpersonal coach to have, especially when working with cases of spiritual emergency because the client's transformation may depend even more highly on the held space within the coaching session.

I suggest that a transpersonal coach's commitment to engage in their own regular mindfulness practice, may help them to hold the space and enter open-awareness within coaching sessions more easily. As the article "An Integral Approach to Spiritual Emergency" (n.d.) suggests, "The therapist acts as ground control, a stabilizing presence whose calmness and guidance during this turbulent time can be profoundly reassuring. The consciousness of the therapist is of paramount importance." It is also my personal experience that being committed to a balanced lifestyle and maintaining a regular mindful practise or other transformative practices are important to stay grounded and balanced when working to facilitate another person's transformation.

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Open Awareness In Life and Liberation

By Tanya Kaps

Open Awareness (OA) has value in the domains of 1) resourcing solutions to life's presenting issues, 2) healing and recovering from burnout 3) potentiating spiritual awakening. OA is a mindful mode of perception accompanied by a calm and receptive state (Dangeli, 2017). This paying close attention with an open curiosity would facilitate breaking the patterns of fixated attention or habitual patterns of attention. This new mode of consciousness can open one up to new solutions.

Einstein famously noted that we cannot solve the world's significant problems with the same level of consciousness that created it. To solve our current problems, the metacognitive introspective awareness cultivated through OA allows for this shift in consciousness, thus accessing higher order solutions by transcending the current level of consciousness. Furthermore, I recall reading anecdotes of Einstein that described how his greatest insights arose when he 'stopped thinking about the problem'. He would intentionally create silence and space, and it was in these spaces that the insight would come. In the domain of healing, Van der Kolk (2014) states, "neuroscience research shows that the only way we can change the way we feel is by becoming aware of our inner experience and learning to befriend what is going on inside ourselves." Dangeli (2017) states that in his work, OA proved to be pivotal in the healing process. From the perspective that our body holds the memories which need to be seen and integrated for healing, then the enhanced internal awareness, improved extrasensory awareness, and sense of interconnectivity all would facilitate this process of healing (Dangeli, 2017).

Not only OA has the potential to both reframe perspective, which can help to resource new solutions, and aid in healing, it also has the potential to recognize when we are in identification. In Vedanta, an ancient spiritual system of self-realization, this identification is considered 'the fundamental problem'. The 'fundamental insight' is recognizing this leads to suffering, and that liberation is found through dis-identification. This insight is considered a critical

step in awakening as it leads to self-inquiry, and ultimately absolute dis-identification with all mutable and limited objects of awareness. In Vedanta scriptures, self-knowledge takes place when we recognise that we are awareness itself - permanent and limitless. This subject-object switch is *moksa* – freedom through self-knowledge. Another facet of this awakening is total inclusivity. When the ‘I am no-thing - I am everything’ paradox is resolved, freedom is known.

Enlightenment is a destructive process. It has nothing to do with becoming better or being happier. Enlightenment is the crumbling away of untruth. It is a seeing through the facade of pretense. It is the complete eradication of everything we imagined to be true. (Adyashanti 2010).

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A New Self

By Marilyn Cawley

“The key to growth is the introduction of higher dimensions of consciousness into our awareness” (Lao Tsu)

When I contemplate the meaning of the word ‘growth’, concepts such as ‘make bigger’, ‘a new direction’, ‘a new understanding’, ‘a different perspective’ and ‘moving forwards’ come to my mind. All of these suggest change and transformation from what is or was to what could be – a limitless possibility inviting an exploration of the Self.

Open Awareness (OA) used in Transpersonal Coaching engages clients in a more expanded state of awareness. It is a “mindful mode of perception accompanied by a calm and receptive state” (Dangeli, 2017:4) which activates the client’s ‘inner healer’ (Sparks, 2016), ‘higher self’ (Deikman, 1982) or ‘supra individual Witness’ (Wilbur, 1993:29) by providing internal space to observe “thoughts, feelings and sensory perceptions in the present” (Dangeli, 2017:6).

One value of using OA in Transpersonal Coaching is the positive effect it has on the body’s ability to feel calm and relaxed. Observations made in trauma research (Levine, 2010, Van de Kolk, 2015), also point out the necessity of engaging the body’s autonomic nervous system as the gateway to recovery and a deeper understanding of ourselves.

With this enhanced awareness, and activation of the parasympathetic nervous system, clients in Transpersonal Coaching are able to intuit and perceive a reality that is more whole

on the personal, interpersonal and transpersonal levels (Dangeli, 2017:14). By engaging clients in a coaching process in all of these dimensions, Transpersonal Coaching can help clients move away from self-concepts that may be limiting, to expanded states in which a deeper connection with self, other and nature can be realized (Dangeli, 2017:5).

Another important function of OA in Transpersonal Coaching is the therapeutic relationship or spiritual resonance it creates between the coach and the client. As the coach enters OA with the client, they help to create a safe container that 'holds the space' for the therapeutic process. Within this container, the Transpersonal Coach experiences a reality on the same level as the client and is thus more open to identify and receive emotional and spiritual material that may be surfacing for the client (Dangeli, 2018:36). This joint adventure into expanded states therefore creates a process in which transformation can be jointly shared and experienced.

Open Awareness is thus an important feature in Transpersonal Coaching. By entering the expanded state of OA together, the coach and client can experience a shared reality of potential in which according to Walsh & Vaughan (1980:21) transformations of thoughts, personality and existence can occur. In other words, a whole new Self can be realized.

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Open Awareness Reflections

By Augusto Muench

While interpreting the very core of Trans-Personal Coaching: walk with others a path to solve non-satisfactory situations through resources beyond the self (person) – it seems inevitable that enhancing consciousness on elements that lie beyond the usual day-to-day awareness brings opportunities to observe those unsatisfied situations from different (renewed) angles. Open Awareness offers perhaps the simplest – and most evident – tool to experience an expanded and brighter state of the “self”.

While exercising Open Awareness (OA) one can – consciously – guide the mind to perceive beyond the usual not only externally – elements or people in our surrounding, their actions and energy – but also internally: assessing what type of emotions I am experiencing, and whether or not those emotions suffer any changes when expanding the outer-world awareness. In practical terms, OA might offer even realization of why our mind directs our actions (or reactions) in a certain way.

Hylke Faber (2018) proposes, as an example, seven fear families that might guide our daily actions through modified behaviors (from fear itself). He states that those modified behaviors – to the extreme – will potentially result in the feared scenario becoming a reality. I have experienced high stress, as an outcome of fear of acceptance in the past. This stress vanished once I became aware of its source and defined how I wanted to act towards this specific feared scenario. OA could suffice as a vehicle to become aware of this fear and establish a satisfactory “higher” alternative to it.

Alternatively and reflecting on what lies beyond the self, I flew back to Viktor Frankl’s thesis on the meaning of life (1946); which lies on a tangible purpose to grow (as a human being) that makes us wake up every morning to live wholly, even facing the toughest circumstances. He states that life’s purposes (meaning) lie within us – and grow as we mature. Frankl’s “meaning” is supported by evolving physically, mentally and spiritually (basis for his

survival). I foresee OA with its holotropic characteristic, as a potent tool to heal in these three dimensions.

My last reflection, ancient Greeks defined four basic forms of love. Three of them commonly experienced by many of us: EROS – love of pleasure; PHILIA – love to fellows; STORGE – love within the family (Parents / Children / Siblings). One last defined word for love is AGAPE: love that gives and sacrifices for the highest good of another person; utterly unselfish (highest relation to compassion). Fred Kofman (2002) states: “AGAPE is a virtue that needs to be developed”; equally, OA glimpses at non-dual awareness, a state of “pure-openness” (more commonly the result of prolonged meditation and contemplative practice) yet offering the opportunity to experience AGAPE, love beyond my dissolved EGO.

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Open Awareness from an Integral Yoga Perspective

By Margarita Coca

I have an established daily yoga practice. I used to separate meditation from my other practices. This has changed and has made a significant difference in the depth of my practice as well as how I move through each day. For over a year, I have added entering into states of Open Awareness to my yoga practice. Instead of devoting a specific and separate time for meditation or OA, I've easily integrated it into my yoga practice. It came as a surprise that Open Awareness could be used to add a meditative layer to any other practice. Beginning my day with yoga *and* OA, I found I could go on with my day with an open disposition and a more loving attitude towards myself and others.

As a yoga teacher, I discovered that Open Awareness provided the perfect frame for my practice. Entering into the state of Open Awareness facilitated being more profoundly in touch with my body as it opened my awareness inward to deeper levels. I could feel my organs, my tendons, and muscles working together as one and in total alignment with my breathing. I can now listen to the more subtle needs of my body as well as to other people and even the potted plants and flowers in my yoga studio.

Open Awareness has helped me naturally move into the role of observer and has promoted greater compassion and kindness towards myself. For years, and perhaps as a by-product of my culture, I believed that self-care or self-love were mere acts of selfishness. The harsh judgments of myself are softening as a result of this new practice. I see myself as part of an interconnected web of being in which helping others *and myself* contributes to the well-being of all.

Without a doubt, my spiritual practice and my quality of life has been enhanced by Open Awareness. I still devote the same amount of time to meditation as before. Combining OA with my physical yoga practice facilitates entering a meditative state much faster. My body has become an entry point into the emotional realm and I am now aware of just how much

energy was stuck inside of me and in need of release as I open to my vulnerabilities, observing my emotions without hiding from or defending against them. This new practice is my path for getting in touch with my inner wisdom and connecting to my spiritual intuition. I have also found Open Awareness to be an invaluable asset in bringing together my personal practice, my yoga instruction, and interpersonal development. At the beginning of every class, I invite my yoga students to join me in stepping into an Open Awareness state. This simple move allows each of us to feel the interconnection between ourselves as we open to that awareness of the interconnectedness of being. My students report being able to focus on their body as epicenters with a deeper awareness of the effect of every move within their own body while at the same time enjoying a sense of interconnection with each other. I observe them having a friendlier attitude towards one another and an easier time attempting poses they had never tried before. They are more able to bring their attention easily to “here and now” and allow the mindful flow of their breath channeling Prana (the vital force in Sanskrit) into their entire system.

“Yoga” means becoming one with all. Through Open Awareness, they and I become conscious of that unifying state, letting go of a false perception that we are separate from others and our surroundings. In addition to the physical benefits, this is what yoga is all about.

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Open Awareness: The Heart of Transpersonal Psychology Coaching

By Rachel Basset

My understanding and experience of Open Awareness is that it is not just another tool for psychology coaching or therapy. It is the core around which other techniques are interwoven to facilitate change, depending on the clients' individual needs. It is a state of consciousness in which the client experiences space and time differently, as she or he becomes aware of the relations between reality and the narratives responsible for it which take place on the platform of creation, on earth. Our consciousness creates narratives deriving from particular perspectives. These narratives, in turn, reinforce those perspectives. The stories we tell ourselves are the blueprint according to which we create reality. Changing perspectives is thus the most efficient way to change our lives. Many of us are familiar with the following quote by Albert Einstein: "We can't solve problems by using the same kind of thinking we used when we created them." Open Awareness is the space-time in which all truly transformative and healing shifts happen, and in which we can access new, informed thinking and create new reality. According to the mystic and poet John O' Donohue "the way you look at things is the most powerful force in shaping your life".

For my clients, Open Awareness is crucial because it enables them to observe the perspectives from which they create reality. This empowers them on several levels, giving them a sense of freedom from the reality they perceive, a greater, thorough understanding of themselves and others, and a resulting feeling of connection, compassion and love. I have successfully used Open Awareness in coaching sessions to help clients overcome performance anxiety, self-sabotage, panic attacks and feelings of hopelessness and of being stuck. The bigger viewpoint it offers made possible the identification of shadows, the integration of conflicting parts and even the healing of deep-seated trauma. When I coach, I choose to coach in a state of Open Awareness because it allows me to connect with my clients on a deeper level, as well as to remain client-centered at all times. It creates rapport and an atmosphere in which they feel safe, seen and cared about, as I hold the space for them. Open Awareness also helps me to know how long to spend on a particular process or

visualisation during a session, and which techniques or metaphors to use to facilitate the clients' journey towards the achievement of their particular goals or vision.

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Rachel is a certified, licenced transpersonal psychology coach and ICP facilitator accredited by IACTM, and a member of the TCTN, with a background in comparative literature, translation and educational psychology. She loves to help people understand their inner stories and to transform them. For more info, visit her website <https://rachelbasset.wixsite.com/coaching>

How I use Open Awareness in Coaching and in Daily Life

By Joanne Moss

Open Awareness is a state of BEING not DOING. It is a life skill that can benefit everyone – personally and professionally. I use it to bring my clients and myself into the present moment, as this is the only way to access self-awareness, which is the gateway to shifting consciousness and creating the life we want and deserve.

By being more present and therefore more conscious – we can then make more mindful choices resulting in a more meaningful life.

The value of Open Awareness in my coaching practice and in my daily life is - it is a tool that is accessible at any time we need it or want to draw on so we can:

- slow our minds down
- reach a calm state of being
- get a clearer perspective on situations in our life that can be clouded by emotion
- be present and receptive to what IS (not past or future which blurs our thinking)
- reconnect YOU with ALL parts of yourself - accessing all your senses, intuition, thoughts and emotions
- connect and relate better with others, which improves the quality of your relationships

I find OA particularly useful when I am stressed, due to overload - resulting in overwhelm. I not only use it in challenging times – I use it as a daily practice, as it brings calm and clarity to my day. This enables me to keep focussed on what needs to be accomplished and I am therefore more productive.

When I apply OA with my clients, who come to me with burnout and resultant ill health, it is a methodology that enables their “breakdown” to transform into a “breakthrough.” I firmly

believe that your biography becomes your biology! So if we don't break through thoughts, beliefs, emotions and actions – these repeated patterns that do not serve us, erode us and ultimately manifest in our bodies as illness. Ill health is more often than not, the result of unresolved emotions meaning illness is usually a symptom of a deeper cause.

OA equips clients with a tool that they can draw on at any time, leaving them self-reliant, empowered, confident and at peace that they can move from confusion to clarity and from pain to progress - on their own. They understand that “the light at the end of the tunnel” can appear through the perspective they gain from applying OA. The ultimate accomplishment is a greater sense of purpose, joy, fulfilment, meaning and ultimately inner peace.

When you live your life authentically and congruently - honoring ALL of who you are body-mind-spirit - you are then aligned and living in holistic harmony with yourself and THAT is ultimate wellbeing.

“Change the way you look at things and the things you look at change”

Dr Wayne Dyer

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Joanne is an ASE Advanced Facilitator; Open Awareness Facilitator; NLP Practitioner, Mindfulness Practitioner; Reiki Practitioner & Reflexologist.

For many years, I lived my life unaware of how my life and what I deeply yearned for, was being sabotaged by self-limiting beliefs, fears and insecurities. As a result, my passion is to enable, equip and empower people to transform their lives so they can live by CHOICE not by CHANCE. Visit my website <http://www.joannemoss.com/>

The Open Awareness Advantage in Coaching

By Beljeet Singh

Open Awareness is an integral part of my coaching sessions. I find it useful for my clients and for enhancing my role as a coach. Personally, it allows me to centre myself and bring myself completely into the present moment. This enables me to be completely attentive to whatever issue the client presents with. I also find that it enhances my intuition naturally which helps me develop a deeper connection with clients and allows my presence to come from a place of compassion. Additionally, I use Open Awareness to change my personal state of being, specifically replacing a less empowering state with one that is more composed, relaxed and mindful. For example, with Open Awareness, I can drop myself into an immediate state of calm specifically when I am finding an expansion of nervous energy around me or within me.

With clients, I find Open Awareness useful in many situations. My particular preference is using it to help clients who consider themselves stuck in a particular situation and appear to microscopically focus on an issue, get totally fixated on it and are unable to find a way out of it. With Open Awareness exercises clients are able to expand their awareness beyond that issue into a wider spectrum, thus allowing them to see potential possibilities or options available to them. I have noticed that particularly when done in a team setting Open Awareness can help create a deeper connection among participants and is great for team building. By being consciously aware of what the self is experiencing and at the same time being more conscious of the feelings and energy of those around you a deeper, more accepting and less judgemental bond is formed.

It is important to be aware that the exercise of Open Awareness does require regular practice which then over time allows one to drop into the desired state with ease. I encourage clients to spend time in nature with Open Awareness and found the experience of some to be a profound connection that in itself is healing. The simple facts are that Open

Awareness allows you to focus on the present moment allowing one to be more resourceful and enabling deep healing to occur by expanding the sense of self. It is a useful resource in coaching, the added value of which should not be undermined.

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Beljeet is a Professional Life Coach ICF- ACTP, Licensed ASE Facilitator, Licensed Integrative Coaching Facilitator, Licensed Open Awareness Facilitator. She has over 30 years of management experience and has overcome significant personal challenges throughout her own life. Beljeet has the expertise, compassion and understanding to coach those experiencing transformation or relationship challenges in their personal, family or professional life. Sessions are conducted via Skype, WhatsApp or phone globally. Email coach@innerinteractions.com for further information.

Yoga Breathing and Open Awareness

By Malin Johansson

"The in-breath creates the quality you choose to be and the out-breath magnifies, that is, distributes that chosen quality throughout your body for it to be in all that you will do and or say..." - *Serge Benhayon*

Our Breath is our connection to life. It is a tool that supports us to connect more deeply to our physical body and to our essential being.

In Yoga, Pranayama – breath focus - is one of the 8 limbs taught by Sage Patanjali. Pranayama meditations allows us to pull away from the unconscious state directed by the ego and so bringing us closer to a more natural state of great love and reverence for all other beings, for we perceive that what is divine within ourselves is also within every living thing. In an ordinary state of consciousness, which is of the world, one's energy, mind, and awareness are focused on external objects, separated from oneself, perceived through the senses and other aspects of the physical self. When one becomes so identified with the external that the mind is always absorbed in desires, moods, physical sensations, habits, one really does not know himself, one's true nature as a soul; "So long as you keep your mind on the surface of life, so long you will never know what it is to enjoy that blissful state of the soul." (Yogananda) It is only when you go deep within, in meditation, that we can realize how completely we have forgotten what we truly are. Practices such as Open Awareness will enable us to see what a tremendous gap there is between ordinary consciousness, and that consciousness in which we feel that just behind the restless mind, just behind the limited physical awareness, is a vast realm of divine awareness, of divine bliss (Sri Daya Mata, n.d.).

OA allows us to reconnect with ourselves. It is an exercise in allowing our senses to experience the fullness of the present moment without identifying ourselves with them, becoming aware even of the subtleties that we may normally overlook, ignore, or miss altogether. With a quiet and presence of mind, sometimes realisations come into conscious awareness that pertain to potential experiences in our near or distant future (Dangeli, 2017).

When we simply notice and allow things to be as they are, we naturally disengage from the impulses that would try to control or change things. Open Awareness Meditation allows us to understand more about the moment we are in. The more we know in any circumstance, the more informed our decisions can be. Through becoming less identified with a limiting self-concept, we are less controlled by negative thoughts and reactions. We make space for a deeper sense of connection with other individuals, connection with nature and the spiritual realm, and a sense of oneness in which there is no real separation between self and other. With this comes inner peace and meaning in life (Dangeli, 2017).

Being in OA, as the coach or therapist, we pay attention to everything when we're working with our clients. We are able to develop rapport naturally and rapidly, with the result that we are able to help someone to advance in their thinking, or to overcome obstacles, sometimes without needing to use any of the other psychological techniques (Dangeli, 2017).

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Sri Daya Mata - <http://www.yogananda-srf.org>
<http://ojasyog.com/2017/11/15/pranabreath-bridge-mind-body/>

Article Author

Malin Johansson

Malin first discovered yoga in 2013. What was meant only as a practice to heal from an injury soon became a dedicated practice of healing and growth. Within 8 months she had resigned from her job and signed up for her first 200 hour teacher training. To further her own discovery and growth she has since 2015 completed a number of trainings in various

styles of yoga and deepened her own self-knowledge through techniques such as Vipassana. Her curiosity on what is possible to discover about yourself, and the ancient and modern teachings of yoga is what brought her to Transpersonal Psychology.

Open Awareness - Enhancing Learning and Recovery

By Naomi Kieswetter

Years of experience in corporate and motherhood has evoked my interest in interpersonal relationships and has led me to do what I love today, therefore, my approach is authentic, passionate and professional in working with individuals in my business.

Also, as founder of an NPO our key aim is to empower disadvantaged unemployed individuals with an integrated learning approach by combining practical skills and coaching methodologies for the future to minimize unemployment in South Africa.

In my coaching practice I use the process of Open Awareness to assist clients to bring full attention to the sensory experience for what is in the present moment and develop a deep connection to their authentic self.

I have worked with clients from all walks of life, with a wide range of issues like, relationship challenges, substance abuse, making major life choices and in their careers.

In the case of addiction, clients have experienced that the process of Open Awareness has helped them become more aware of the root cause of the problem that resulted in numbing the pain with substances such as alcohol. The more they practiced the process, they became more in touch with the connection between body, mind and spirit. Instead of focusing on avoiding or controlling triggers that result in the negative emotion or the craving for the substance, they start to cultivate in the present moment, compassionate and non-judgmental awareness of their own thoughts, feelings, and where they find themselves, their mental state and what is going on for them.

In my NPO, I currently work with adults in poor disadvantaged communities, facilitating a Basic Computer Literacy Course, and at the start of the 6-week program, I have taught my students Open Awareness. These adults have never been exposed to any kind of coaching, awareness, or mindfulness practice. In fact, they have never heard about it. I started by

explaining the Open Awareness process and benefits to them; and how it relates to a learning environment and having an open mind to learn new skills. The students were immediately curious and stepped into the practice with excitement. With the sound of my voice, I guided them into the process and within moments I could see that they were tuning into the process. Some of them closed their eyes without me asking them to do so. Feedback from them was overwhelming and humbling. They reported that they felt more relaxed and the tension, low self-confidence and anxiousness with which they came into the classroom had become less and for some completely resolved. They were curious to learn what I had prepared for them.

In my own life, when I feel anxious or overwhelmed, or unable to sleep due to an overactive mind, I find myself automatically going into a state of Open Awareness.

Open Awareness is like a dance with what is in the present moment and balancing the flow of the breath naturally with all of my senses to calm my body, mind and spirit.

Article Author

Naomi Kieswetter

Naomi is a certified Executive Business Coach, Master NLP Practitioner, Authentic Self-Empowerment (ASE) Facilitator and Ericksonian Hypnotherapy Practitioner.

Open Awareness and Dealing With Loss

By Shelley J. Whitehead

Most of my clients arrive for their first session experiencing deep anxiety, a sense of overwhelm and uncertainty. They describe their circumstances and are completely fixated on this loss and confusion, explaining that for them life has no meaning and it feels as if nothing will ever be normal again. They feel hopeless and are not able to see beyond the pain and confusion. I have had clients describe this state as akin to being in a long dark tunnel. From this perspective they are without resources and feel stuck.

In individual session and in working with couples, I guide and encourage my clients to embody a broader, expanded, enhanced, connected to everything, perspective. From this resourceful state of open awareness they are able to focus and address the situation differently, finding the deeper truths and meanings that are life changing.

As they learn about open awareness and begin to integrate it, these clients shift and life begins to take on a different meaning because their entire perception of themselves has begun to change in relation to their original pain and feelings of “stuckness”.

With the practice of open awareness, my clients have reported that their state is one of calmness, a sense of expansiveness where they are aware of some much more. They are collaborative and more resourceful, find it easier to implement and take action on the next little step as they embrace the process of rebuilding their lives and their relationships.

They know that when encountering a challenge or obstacle there is always a trusted method that can be accessed immediately, anywhere and at any time.

Article Author

Shelley J Whitehead

Shelley is a London-based relationship coach nurturing people and couples across the world into living happy, loving lives. Aside from working 1-1 or in groups, Shelley helps men and women heal after divorce or bereavement and step into the dating game with confidence. She knows how tough life can get, having lost a partner to cancer and experienced her own divorce. As a result, the tools she shares with her clients are all ones she's used herself.

<https://www.facebook.com/shellsuniverse>

Open Awareness enhances Personal Outcomes

By Mandy Beart

Over the years many people have become my clients because their attention had become narrowly fixated and they were no longer able to see a balanced, wider and more holistic perspective of the many choices that were available to them. I have found that maintaining open awareness in a coaching environment is an effective way of holding the space to facilitate exploration, discovery and healing in a safe and responsive setting in which the client's process can unfold. I have also found that teaching my clients about maintaining open awareness is as important as the coaching process itself. The client and the coach can move away from a fixated tunnel awareness, to a state of openness, receptivity and equanimity.

A newly promoted candidate in the finance sector was feeling the pressure of stepping into his new management role in a highly competitive environment. His stress was exacerbated by the need to pass his imminent board exam. He needed to hold his own, and not display his internalised 'junior status', or allow it to affect his studies or his exam results. Experiencing open awareness through his coaching process allowed him to access and understand the choices that were open to him of how to fulfil his role for the best benefit of the business and, at the same time, manage his studies for the all-important exam that was looming. With hard work and his new-found ability to filter the noise of his negative self-chatter, his confidence and sense of satisfaction improved significantly. He passed his board exams and is currently being considered for a second promotion.

A middle-aged woman in a middle-management role applied for voluntary retrenchment after 30 years' service to her company. She felt abandoned, bereft, adrift and without an identity when her application was accepted. Her experience of open awareness during her coaching process opened up her thinking to all the opportunities that she had missed during her dedicated long service to just one company. Her life now has a better work-life balance

including a less stressful job, with similar remuneration and benefits, a social life and time for her family.

These are just two of many examples from my coaching sessions that document specific enhancements in performance at the individual level when using open awareness. Through learning to use open awareness during coaching and to maintain open awareness in their life, clients are able to experience enhanced personal outcomes by improving performance directly, and also, more indirectly in areas such as productivity, goal setting and achievement, interpersonal skills and time management.

Article Author

Mandy Beart

As a Self Empowerment Coach, I believe that, when we take an integrative approach to life's challenges, we can create the lives that we desire. By coaching the whole person, not just the part that is 'ailing', we are able to expand our awareness and become aware of the many choices that are available to us in order to identify, heal and transform the parts of ourselves that are affecting us negatively. Opening our mode of perception can be generative and transformative because, through self-empowerment and self-development, we are able to deal more resourcefully with life's challenges. For more info, visit my website <https://mandybeart.com/>



Open Awareness

Seeing with New Eyes

Chapter 6

Open Awareness for Life

This chapter includes a list of free OA resources, information about OA training, retreats and an OA based coaching program.

Open Awareness Resources

Realizing how deeply interconnected we all are, is the answer!

According to the Psychiatry and Pediatric Specialist, Dr Dan Siegel:

“Joy, creativity, awe, gratitude, compassion, kindness—the qualities we cherish the most will naturally emerge when we drop beneath the illusion of separateness and realize our profound interconnection.”

Open Awareness dissolves the illusion of separateness and promotes a sense of interconnection.

Visit the links over the following 2 pages to access free OA resources

- [Introduction to OA video](#) (includes OA research in relation to stress and burnout)
- [OA presentation video](#) (Holding The Space for Healing & Transformation)
- [Overview of OA article](#)
- [The OA Hierarchy article](#)
- [Listen to an OA guided process](#)
- [OA training video](#)

- [OA meditation video](#)
- [Guided OA mindfulness meditation](#)
- [OA in relation to mindful stress resilience](#)
- [OA for burnout prevention and recovery](#)
- [Eliminating panic attacks & performance anxiety with OA](#)
- [Read Jevon Dangeli's MSc dissertation on OA](#)
- [OA in Coaching](#)
- [Spacebook](#) (for integrating open awareness)
- [Embodying OA through jumi \(judo mind\) practice](#)

For questions about OA and how to make best use of the resources listed above, please contact us.

Disclaimer:

OA is not intended to diagnose, treat or cure any mental health or medical conditions. OA is not a replacement for psychotherapy or psychological counselling.

Open Awareness training and certification

online and onsite options

For detailed information about the training options listed below, visit - <https://authentic-self-empowerment.com/oa-training/>

1. **Live OA Training**

Weekend events at various locations around the world. [Details here](#)

2. **OA for kids – jumi (judo mind)** [Details here](#)

3. **Learn OA for yourself**

Receive 3 personal training sessions from Jevon via Skype and a comprehensive set of resources (videos, audios & notes).

4. **Learn OA for yourself and to be able to teach it to others informally**

Receive 6 personal training sessions from Jevon via Skype and a comprehensive set of resources (videos, audios & notes).

5. **Learn OA for yourself and to be able to teach it to others in classrooms, workshops or retreats.**

Receive 6 personal training sessions from Jevon plus 3 supervision sessions. Includes a comprehensive set of resources (videos, audios & notes).

6. Become a Certified & Licensed OA Facilitator

Certified OA Facilitators are licensed by Jevon to teach OA and to facilitate OA sessions with clients (individuals and groups). This training includes everything from option 5 (above). Additionally, you will receive ongoing support, supervision, and updated resources. Licensed OA Facilitators are eligible for referrals from us, plus they can be featured in this website's [OA Directory](#) and in our social media.

For detailed information about the training options listed above, visit - <https://authentic-self-empowerment.com/oa-training/>

OA is also a fundamental approach taught in the [Authentic Self Empowerment Facilitator Training](#) and it is a central aspect of the [Transpersonal Coaching Model](#)— in which it is applied to *hold the space* for healing and transformation.

Open Awareness Retreats

Join us for 4 days of OA embodiment. Return rested, rejuvenated and ready to take life on!

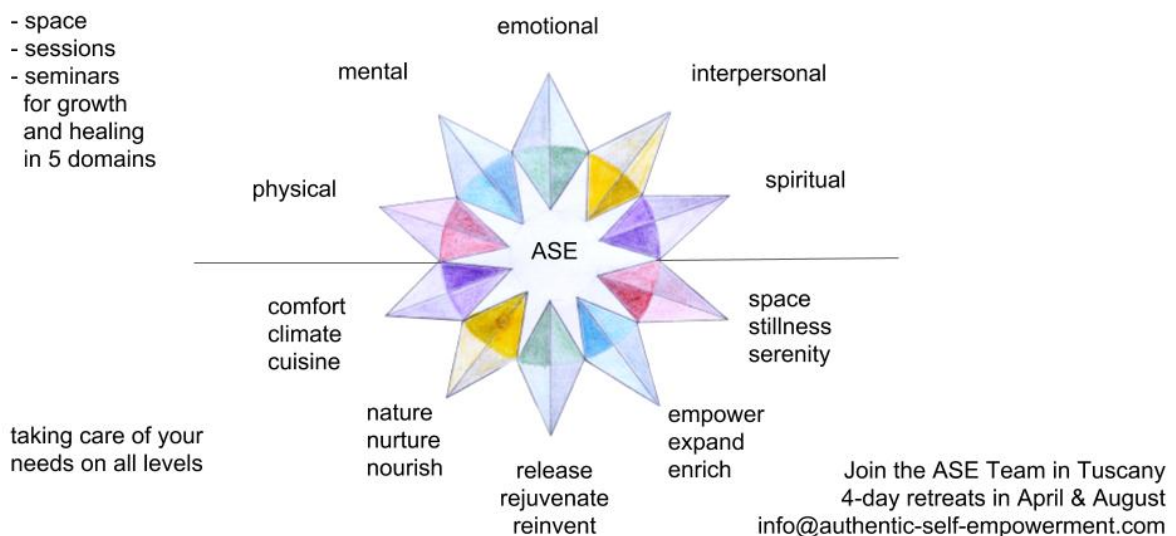
The Authentic Self Empowerment (ASE) approach to coaching, therapy and personal development has OA at its core. Our retreats are referred to as “ASE Immersion”, which involves daily activities, space and cuisine to nurture and empower your body, mind and spirit.

Currently our retreats are held at an idyllic guest villa in Tuscany each April and August. We are also considering to hold retreats near Cape Town, South Africa. Retreats at other locations can be arranged.

For info, visit - <https://authentic-self-empowerment.com/ase-immersion/>

Authentic Self Empowerment (ASE) Immersion

- space
- sessions
- seminars
for growth
and healing
in 5 domains



ASE Integrative Coaching Program

With OA at its core, the ASE Integrative Coaching Program (ICP) is a comprehensive, systematic and holistic approach to personal growth and flourishing

The ICP enables you to optimize the conditions for success in the five main contexts that underpin the ways in which you experience yourself and your life – physical, mental, emotional, interpersonal and spiritual.

The methods used in the ICP are based on well established principles in psychology including applied transformative practices for harnessing your full potential in all five contexts.

This bespoke coaching program is facilitated by Licensed ICP Facilitators who have received [specialised \(OA based\) training](#) and who undergo supervision along with continuing professional development in ICP competency.

From ICP you can expect to gain more clarity, creativity, flow, improved performance, behavioural flexibility, emotional freedom and a deeper sense of meaning in life.

For info, visit - <https://authentic-self-empowerment.com/integrative-coaching-program/>



Last words...

A certainty about uncertainty

“We are all faced with a series of great opportunities brilliantly disguised as impossible situations.” Charles Swindoll

Generally, if you know exactly what lies ahead of you then you may tend to think and behave in set ways (tunnel awareness) - which may in turn limit your perception, spontaneity and creativity. If you don't know what lies ahead, then to the extent that you can remain comfortable with uncertainty, you will be more able to flow with the natural unfolding of life's purpose for you. New possibilities and creative thinking emerge from the field of uncertainty. OA makes it easier!

In this day and age, what's there to be certain about anyway? These are times of rapid change and transformation – very frightening for those who insist on knowing what tomorrow will bring - and so it will remain until we learn to become familiar with the unknown, and in so doing, tap our creative ability to mould and shape our destinies more fluidly. Stress and anxiety arise when what we think we need is threatened by the possibility that we might not get it or lose it. A sense of freedom, inner peace and resourcefulness is the experience of those who are able to embrace the fact that every experience is a changing one.

Many people experience personal breakthroughs the moment they give up trying to have things a certain way. This is not giving in to a situation, it's the realization that we don't need to have all the answers and we don't have to try to control how things turn out, and that's okay. This moment of acceptance leads to new perceptions and possibilities arising in awareness that had previously been blocked by rigid thinking.

Sometimes we need to get out of our own way so that we can see where we are and where we're going more clearly. For this OA is most useful.

The next time you face uncertainty, if you want to move through it more quickly and gracefully, then try approaching your situation as follows:

Realize that in the context of your whole life, what you know is always going to be a tiny island in the infinite ocean of what you don't know. It's from what you don't know that innovative ideas, opportunities and solutions to problems arise. Therefore, allow yourself to feel the feelings associated with not knowing, as this is how you embrace uncertainty. Giving yourself permission to feel those feelings is how you release them from your body and free your mind to identify the best way forward.

I'm not suggesting that you stop planning and organizing things in your life. However, I want to bring your awareness to the fact that no matter what your experience is, it's always a passing one, and therefore you never have to feel stuck or helpless. Embracing uncertainty means embracing life, and in so doing becoming more agile and experiencing more aliveness.

Whatever causes you *dis-ease*... open the aperture of your awareness and embrace it!

Finally, bear in mind that you are capable of more than you think, because there is more to you than what your mind thinks.



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About the author - Jevon Dängeli

No matter what you think you are, You are more than that! Me too...

I'm an adventure seeking and curious person who finds people and life amazing! I enjoy spending time in nature with my family and friends. Human behaviour intrigues me, especially what differentiates us as people. However, it's what connects and unifies all of us as human beings that most fascinates me.



I've had an interest in what motivates human behaviour for as long as I can remember. My desire to help people lead a purposeful life was catapulted when I survived an armed robbery at age 25. The perpetrator deliberately shot at me at close range and the bullet narrowly missed my head. This near-death experience became a defining moment for me. I felt spared for a reason and after intense soul searching the reason became clear: *Make every moment of your life count, not because you never know when it may be over, but because every experience counts for something valuable!*

I'm the author of [8 training manuals](#) relating to Open Awareness (OA) and Authentic Self Empowerment (ASE), including [The User Manual for Your Mind](#). I've recorded over 30 [audio-programmes](#) and a comprehensive video training series that include OA and ASE methodologies.

In 1998 I began studying a variety of alternative healing methods, travelling extensively to learn from leaders in this field. Since then I've been passionately involved in helping people overcome their physical, emotional, relationship and spiritual challenges. I've been providing holistic [NLP, coaching and hypnotherapy certification training](#) around Europe, the UK and South Africa since 2004. ASE, as a stand-alone methodology was established in 2007. Since

then I've been using ASE methods in every session with my clients as it has proven to be the most effective set of skills in my coaching, therapy and training repertoire.

In order to develop a specialized ASE treatment for excessive stress and burnout I did research in this area as part of my MSc degree in 'Consciousness, Spirituality and Transpersonal Psychology'. Although many years of training and experience continue contributing to the development of ASE, it was during a series of unignorable revelations that appeared in meditation where the initial ideas and motivation to create ASE were inspired. I was given a mission! Now, through studying, using and teaching ASE, I'm able to fulfil this mission – helping people discover their true value, while being a proactive part of the Whole to which we all want to belong.

ASE, with OA at its core, has given rise to the development of the Transpersonal Coaching Model which I teach at both [in-person and online transpersonal coaching courses](#) that have obtained university validation (Middlesex, London) and accreditation from the [International Association of Coaches, Therapists & Mentors \(IACTM\)](#).

Independent [OA training](#) is now available at various locations around the world and online.

For a long time I played with the idea of combining my nearly 40 years of judo experience with the psychology and mindfulness exploration that I've engaged in for over 20 years. I was seeking a way to make the broader benefits of judo accessible to children and adults in all spheres of life. After a great deal of practice, testing and refinement, finally, [jumi \(judo-mind\)](#) was established in 2017 out of the marriage of judo and mindfulness, inspired by the vision of open awareness around the world and equal possibilities for all to flourish.

Remember: *When you change your internal map of reality, you change your external experience of reality too. And when you change your experience of reality, the world changes. That's how valuable you are!*